



January 27, 2023

Delegate Leslie Adams, Chair
Courts of Justice Subcommittee #1
Virginia House of Delegates, room 3
1000 Bank St #303
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Chairman Adams and Subcommittee Members:

The undersigned organizations and individual advocates, based in, living in, or working in the Commonwealth of Virginia are experts in human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, child protection, youth and family services, and human rights.

We write in strong support of HB 2131, a two-year pilot project to develop services for sex trafficked youth while sharpening law enforcement’s tactical focus on sex buyers who fuel trafficking markets.

As federal law clearly states,¹ minors exploited in the commercial sex trade are human trafficking victims. Minors in prostitution experience serial rape. No financial transaction erases the psychological, physical, and emotional devastation of being commodified for sex as a developing child. Yet across the Commonwealth, there’s a patchwork of inconsistent responses—including criminalization—when domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) is met in real life and young victims are identified.

HB 2131 is a **practical** and savvy first step toward a unified, effective response to DMST. Its goal is to maximize coordination between law enforcement, service providers, and relevant state agencies to benefit the child. The pilot allows Virginia to ask itself **how** can we effectively get kids out of the sex trade, provide support for sustained exit, and **prevent an endless stream of new victims**.

We believe, with the bill sponsors, that the pilot will result in a best practice protocol that can be used throughout the state.

Thank you for supporting this approach!

Sincerely,

¹Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), Pub. L. No. 106- 386,
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-106hr3244enr/pdf/BILLS-106hr3244enr.pdf>

Virginia-Based Organizations

Anti-Trafficking International – McLean, VA

Ascend Consulting – Fairfax Station, VA

Polaris – Falls Church, VA

Recover Hope, Inc. – Chester, VA

Wealth Management Ministries-Prevention Works Joint Task Force & Coalition – Smithfield, VA

Anti-Trafficking Organizations with staff who are citizens of Virginia

NCOSE (National Center on Sexual Exploitation) – Washington, DC

RAINN (Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network) – Washington, DC

Rights4Girls – Washington, DC

World Without Exploitation – Westport, CT

Survivor Leaders

Cristian Eduardo – New York City, NY

Marjorie Saylor, Alabaster Jar Project – San Diego, CA

Kathy Bryan, The Genesis Project – Heber Springs, AR

Nicole Pearson, Survivors Harbor – Hollywood, FL

Bekah Charleston, Charleston Law Center – Reno, NV