



**Sheryl Sandberg** ✓

22 hrs · 🌐

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Sex trafficking – particularly of young girls and boys – is one of the most heinous acts that takes place anywhere in the world. Those of us in the United States must recognize that these deplorable acts of buying and selling children for sex don't just happen in other countries. They happen here all as well – right under our noses, on our streets, and on the internet. We all have a responsibility to do our part to fight this. That's why we at Facebook support efforts to pass amended legislation in the House that would allow responsible companies to continue fighting sex trafficking while giving victims the chance to seek justice against companies that knowingly facilitate such abhorrent acts.

I care deeply about this issue and I'm so thankful to all the advocates who are fighting tirelessly to make sure we put a stop to trafficking while helping victims get the support they need. Facebook is committed to working with them and with legislators in the House and Senate as the process moves forward to make sure we pass meaningful and strong legislation to stop sex trafficking.

## **Myth vs. Fact for Call with Tech Companies**

H.R. 1865, the *Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act* (FOSTA), with the Walters Amendment

**Myth: This bill increases the risk of burdensome and frivolous litigation.**

**Fact:**

- Congress created a federal private right of action for trafficking victims in the *Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003*, enabling victims to pursue justice against any trafficking venture that knowingly participated in their exploitation.
  - We all know that Section 230 was never intended to create a lawless internet where people can commit crimes online that they cannot commit offline. But courts have interpreted Section 230 to make the tech industry the only industry in America protected from civil suits relating to illegal conduct.
- Since Congress enacted this federal private right of action fifteen years ago, *there has only ever been one fully litigated case*—a case brought by 3 minors against Backpage.com.
  - In that case, the First Circuit Court of Appeals said there is a “fundamental tension” between Section 230 and the private right of action, even if Backpage was independently developing content to facilitate sex trafficking (thus acting as an information content provider instead of an interactive computer service provider). The court directed Congress to explicitly clarify this tension, saying that “the remedy is through legislation, not litigation.”
- The Walters Amendment clarifies that Section 230 does not prevent sex trafficking victims from using their federal private right of action (18 USC 1595) to sue websites that *knowingly* assist, support, or facilitate sex trafficking.
- The Walters Amendment would only allow trafficking victims to bring cases in federal district court. It would *not* expose tech companies to 50 different state liability laws.
- The Walters Amendment would not open the floodgates to survivors clamoring for damages.
  - We know that trafficking victims are traumatized, socioeconomically disadvantaged, rarely sue, and have extremely limited access to attorneys who have the capacity to bring cases in federal court.
  - It would take a tremendous amount of evidence to prove that a website operator knew that the person in the ad was a trafficking victim, and that the website operator was actively facilitating the sale of that person.
- The Internet Association and other tech companies agree that the Walters Amendment provides a high enough bar to impede frivolous litigation.

**Myth: This bill places an onerous burden on small tech companies.**

**Fact:**

- In response to concerns raised by tech companies, House and Senate Committees narrowed the original bills to empower state prosecutors to protect their communities and empower victims to sue the bad actor websites that sell them while ensuring that tech companies do not have to abide by 50 different state laws.
- The bills preserve Section 230's Good Samaritan provision that protects websites that monitor third-party content. This means that websites won't face criminal or civil liability for knowingly facilitating sex trafficking or prostitution if the website is simply reviewing, filtering, and restricting access to objectionable material in good faith.
- The bills specifically target the actions of bad actor websites, and do not empower criminal or civil cases against companies that are acting in good faith.
- We have faith that tech companies—like every small business in America, ranging from hotels to transportation centers to shopping malls—can develop responsible policies to ensure that they are not knowingly supporting criminal activity.
- The Internet Association, which represents many small tech companies, had numerous internal conversations and was satisfied by changes made to the bills. The Association chose to endorse both FOSTA and SESTA/Walters Amendment because websites will not be held liable if they merely know that trafficking has occurred on their platforms or remove trafficking content.

**Myth: The bill could discourage platforms from proactively monitoring for trafficking activity.**

**Fact:**

- (This is an argument made by Engine and TechFreedom, but not other tech associations/companies.)
- Section 230 explicitly states that websites should not be dis-incentivized from monitoring illegal activity, and FOSTA/Walters Amendment does not change this. Section 230(c)(1) recognizes that service providers cannot be treated like publishers of and be held responsible for the third-party content of news posted on their platforms. Section 230(c)(2) protects ISPs from litigation for their actions to restrict access to objectionable content. These sections are preserved by the new legislation, and companies are encouraged to continue monitoring content.
- Under FOSTA/Walters Amendment, tech companies would not be criminalized for merely finding illegal content on their sites or knowing that there is illegal content on their sites.<sup>1</sup> Tech companies would have to be engaged in criminal conduct themselves, by knowingly facilitating or supporting a sex trafficking venture.

**Myth: Federal laws are enough to combat sex trafficking. The Department of Justice should just do more; state and local prosecutors don't need to get involved.**

**Fact:**

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<sup>1</sup> (But if a website knowingly profits from and edits illegal ads to make them more difficult for law enforcement to identify, such as what Backpage.com has done by removing indications of human trafficking then posting the ads anyway, then even its other efforts to remove objectionable content do not allow them to evade liability.)

- Online sex trafficking is a lucrative business, and website operators know they will likely never be prosecuted. The business will flourish until we elevate the risk for those who are knowingly facilitating this crime, and provide criminal deterrence.
- The problem is that federal prosecution is discretionary, and 90% of criminal prosecutions take place at the state and local level. DOJ has only ever prosecuted two websites—MyRedBook and RentBoy—though we know Backpage is currently under federal investigation in Arizona.
- Backpage.com is just part of a large and diverse ecosystem, and hundreds of advertising sites operate in this market with impunity.<sup>2</sup> Websites that advertise victims are often first seen on the local level, and should be investigated when they are small.
- If we are serious about helping victims, we must pass laws that allow for robust state and local criminal enforcement. Robust criminal enforcement means businesses will stay out of the illegal sex trade; fewer vulnerable people will ever become victims; and demand will be reduced.
- Both FOSTA and the Walters Amendment are narrowly written to allow state and local prosecutors to use their state laws only insofar as those laws mirror the federal law; this way, websites are not being subject to 50 different state laws. The tech industry is the only industry in America that only needs to abide by federal criminal elements; and FOSTA *generously* maintains this privilege.
- (*Background: Section 230 explicitly allows for enforcement of federal criminal law, but does not explicitly allow for enforcement of state criminal law or federal civil law.*<sup>3</sup>)

**Myth: This bill chills free speech on the internet.**

**Fact:**

- The First Amendment is critical to our democracy, but has never been absolute. For example, it does not protect offers to engage in illegal transactions.
- Knowingly assisting or facilitating ads that sell illegal acts with sex trafficking victims is not protected speech; it is criminal conduct. Therefore, the legislation does not implicate First Amendment speech protections.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Eros serves the high-end market; Escorts in College advertises women and girls close to *and under* the age of consent; cityxguide.com is used all over the country; and Massage Troll is popular in the Midwest. Beyond these advertising hubs, there are also hobby boards: websites where johns post reviews of their sexual encounters. The Erotic Review is the Yelp of the sex market, allowing users to rate victims on shockingly graphic descriptions.

<sup>3</sup> Section 230(e)(3) says vaguely that “*Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent any State from enforcing any State law that is consistent with this section.*” Unfortunately, some courts have interpreted this provision so broadly that any state case brought against an internet service provider is seen as inconsistent with Section 230. Backpage has been able to convince courts to use Section 230(e)(3) to block Washington, Tennessee, and New Jersey from criminalizing the advertisement of sex trafficking. Internet companies have encouraged this wide-sweeping interpretation. FOSTA clarifies that state and local prosecutors can in fact enforce state prostitution and sex trafficking laws insofar as they mirror the elements of the federal criminal statutes.

- The bill makes it clear that good faith filtering and publisher protections are still very much protected; the mere publication of third-party content that is later found to sell sex with a trafficking victim is not evidence that a website is knowingly assisting or facilitating trafficking.

**Brief History of Section 230:** The Communications Decency Act of 1996 (CDA) sought to address the problem of children accessing sexually explicit material online. Nebraska Senator Jim Exon, who introduced the bill, said at the time that “the information superhighway should not become a red-light district.”

At the same time, Congress wanted to preserve the young internet as a forum for “true diversity of political discourse, unique opportunities for cultural development, and myriad avenues for intellectual activity” with minimal government regulation. Congress realized, however, that the internet could be a forum for crime, and it clarified that the policy of the United States was to ensure vigorous enforcement of Federal criminal laws to deter and punish illegal conduct. To balance these concerns, Congress added Section 230 as an amendment to the Communications Decency Act.

Section 230 encouraged corporations to limit explicit material online by protecting them from litigation for their efforts to actively screen such content. Section 230 protects ISPs from liability for illegal third-party content, but not illegal conduct. Unfortunately, in numerous criminal and civil cases brought against Backpage.com since 2010, courts have harmfully over-interpreted Section 230 to provide immunity to websites that knowingly facilitate sex trafficking. Over the past two years, several courts have called on Congress to clarify whether there is legal protection for websites that facilitate online sex trafficking. For example:

- 1) In November 2016, the Sacramento Superior Court dismissed pimping charges brought by the California Attorney General against Backpage: “[T]he Court understands the importance and urgency in waging war against sexual exploitation. Regardless of the grave potential for harm that may result in the exercise of this article of faith, Congress has precluded liability for online publishers for the action of publishing third party speech and thus provided for both a foreclosure from prosecution and an affirmative defense at trial. **Congress has spoken on this matter and it is for Congress, not this Court, to revisit.**”
- 2) In 2016, the First Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed trafficking charges in a civil case against Backpage after recognizing a “fundamental tension” between Section 230 and the private right of action available to trafficking victims under the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act*: “Congress did not sound an uncertain trumpet when it enacted the CDA, and it chose to grant broad protections to internet publishers. Showing that a website operates through a meretricious business model is not enough to strip away those protections. If the evils that the appellants have identified are deemed to outweigh the First Amendment values that drive the CDA, **the remedy is through legislation, not through litigation.**”

- 3) In August 2017, the Sacramento Superior Court again dismissed pimping charges brought by the California Attorney General against Backpage: **“If and until Congress sees fit to amend the immunity law, the broad reach of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act even applies to those alleged to support the exploitation of others by human trafficking.”**

Due to these obstacles to criminal enforcement, in 2013, 47 Attorneys General endorsed an amendment to remove Section 230’s barrier against state criminal prosecutions. In August 2017, 50 Attorneys General again petitioned Congress to amend Section 230 to allow states to enforce their criminal laws.

FOSTA strikes a fine line between the needs of law enforcement and the tech industry; it allows states to enforce prostitution and sex trafficking laws only insofar as the state laws mirror the elements of the federal law. This a laudable compromise that means tech companies do not need to abide by 50 different state standards, but that bad actor websites can still be prosecuted.



**PRESS STATEMENT**  
For Immediate Release  
February 26, 2018

## **Enough Is Enough Calls on the U.S. House of Representatives to Pass Critical Legislation to Hold Websites Accountable for Knowingly Facilitating Sex Trafficking**

Statement by Donna Rice Hughes, President & CEO, Enough Is Enough

**Great Falls, VA.** -- H.R. 1865, the *Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017 (FOSTA)*, originally introduced by Representative Ann Wagner, is scheduled for an historic floor vote on Tuesday. The need for legislation to clarify Section 230 of the Communication's Decency Act (CDA) is necessary given the 1st Circuit ruling in *Doe v. Backpage* which held that **even if Backpage had participated in the crime of sex trafficking, Section 230 shielded the company** from the claims filed by child victims.

"The urgency to amend **Section 230** of the Communications Decency Act is long overdue," said EIE President Donna Rice Hughes. "Section 230, originally known as the Good Samaritan Defense, was intended to protect children from the online exploitation. Unfortunately, it has been anything but a Good Samaritan immunity for responsible Internet service and content providers, and instead has been misused by third party websites like backpage.com as a Trojan horse to knowingly facilitate sex and trafficking with women in children," said Ms. Hughes. "There must be accountability in the form of state and local criminal and civil liability for such sites which have been referred to by prosecutors as an ['online brothel'](#)." Its time to put the dignity of women and children over corporate profit," said Hughes.

For years, EIE has encouraged Congress to amend Section 230 due to a series of devastating rulings in multiple court cases over the years which have misinterpreted Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act by granting anything goes immunity to websites whose advertising business model knowingly facilitates sex trafficking and exploitation.

"By passing FOSTA along with the crucial amendment offered by Representative Mimi Walters which mirrors S. 1693 "Stop Enabling Sex Trafficking Act 2017" (SESTA), each member of the House has the opportunity to send an 'enough is enough' clarion message to sites who exploit and traffic vulnerable children and women and to the federal courts who have failed to properly interpret Congress's original intent for #230. An overwhelming 'yes' vote by the House will say to child victims, 'we hear you, we see you and we are standing with you by providing the necessary legislative remedy to seek justice,'" continued Hughes, who applauded the [resolution](#) last week set forth unanimously by the Kentucky House of Representatives, which requested and petitioned the U.S. Congress to amend sections of the Community Decency Act (CDA 230) to "permit the prosecution of interactive computer service providers."

-- (continued)--

In 2016, during his candidacy, Donald Trump signed EIE's [Children's Internet Safety Presidential Pledge](#) in which he promised to "aggressively enforce existing federal laws to prevent the sexual exploitation of children online, including the obscenity, child pornography, sexual predation & sex trafficking laws." Ms. Hughes added, "We strongly urge the House to pass the FOSTA-SESTA compromise package and move it to the Senate, offering hope to and justice for those who have suffered from this unconscionable act of human exploitation." SESTA, originally introduced by Senators Portman and Blumenthal currently has 67 bipartisan Senate co-sponsors and is endorsed by the Internet Association (IA), as is H.R. 1865.

In 2013, Enough Is Enough voiced strong support of the effort of The National Association of Attorneys General (49 Attorneys General) calling on Congress to support a simple two word amendment that would enable state prosecutors to help fight prostitution and child sex trafficking. Unfortunately, Congress failed to act, resulting in more years of untold trauma and exploitation for trafficking victims and huge profits for websites and interactive service providers.

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**Media Inquiries:**

Donna Hughes  
[ricehughes@aol.com](mailto:ricehughes@aol.com)

Kathy Hatem  
703-244-8248  
[swandak@aol.com](mailto:swandak@aol.com)

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*[Enough Is Enough®](#) is a national bi-partisan non-profit organization who has led the fight to make the Internet safer for children and families by incorporating a three-pronged prevention strategy urging a shared responsibility between the public, industry, and government.*

[Enough.org](#), [InternetSafety101.org](#)



## FAITH IN ACTION

February 26, 2018

### **FAITH & FREEDOM ENCOURAGES U.S. HOUSE TO PASS THE "ALLOW STATES AND VICTIMS TO FIGHT ONLINE SEX TRAFFICKING ACT"**

Washington, DC – Today, the Faith & Freedom mobilized its over 1.7 million members across the nation to call (202) 224-3121 and encourage members of the U.S. House of Representatives to **vote YES** on the **Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act** to shine a light on the marketplaces that contribute to the growing epidemic of sex trafficking in the United States and protect our most vulnerable citizens who are caught up in the online sex trade.

Human trafficking is the fastest-growing organized crime activity in the United States, making around \$32 billion a year for criminals while destroying the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Currently, there are at least 105,000 children in America that are victims of human trafficking. In 2014, 70% of child sex trafficking victims were sold online.

Tomorrow, the House will vote on the **Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017**, which gives states and victims the power to sue websites that facilitate human trafficking and provides law enforcement with the necessary tools to fight these predators who buy and sell children for sex.

Faith & Freedom has been working alongside Rep. Ann Wagner (R-MO) and Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) on legislation to empower law enforcement to effectively combat online sex trafficking hubs that profit from and provide safe haven for modern day slave traders.

#### Recent Articles

February 26, 2018

**Faith & Freedom Encourages U.S. House to Pass The "Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Tra...**  
(<https://www.ffcoalition.com/faith-freedom-encourages-u-s-house-pass-allow-states-victims-fight-online-sex-trafficking-act/>)

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February 12, 2018

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We believe that the greatness of America lies not in the federal government but in the character of our people.

P.O. BOX 957736

DULUTH, GA 30095-9529

770-622-1501

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February 23, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Office of the Democratic Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker and Leader Pelosi:

As organizations and leaders in the movement to end human trafficking, we want to thank you for scheduling this important floor vote on H.R. 1865, the *Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017 (FOSTA)*, originally introduced by Representative Ann Wagner. The need for legislation to clarify Section 230 of the Communication's Decency Act (CDA) is urgently needed given the 1<sup>st</sup> Circuit ruling in *Doe v. Backpage*. That ruling held that **even if Backpage had participated in the crime of sex trafficking, Section 230 shielded the company** from the claims filed by child victims. We greatly appreciate the support of all of the bill's co-sponsors who fully understand the barriers Section 230 has created in the ability of state law enforcement and survivors to seek justice against websites that are engaged in facilitating human trafficking.

To that end, we would like to express our strong support for the crucial amendment being offered by Representative Mimi Walters to the underlying bill that will specifically address the Section 230 problem. Representative Walters' amendment is critical to stemming the tide of online human trafficking. Importantly, in its ruling, the 1<sup>st</sup> Circuit Court recommended that child victims seek a legislative remedy to this problem—and the children have done just that. We are thrilled that the Internet Association (IA), has not only endorsed H.R. 1865, but also its Senate counterpart, S.1693, the *Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act of 2017 (SESTA)* introduced by Senators Rob Portman and Richard Blumenthal. Representative Walters' amendment mirrors the SESTA legislation that currently has 67 bipartisan Senate co-sponsors.

Assuming the Walters' amendment is adopted and there are no additional amendments added that would weaken these measures, we strongly urge the House to pass this package and send it to the Senate.

We thank you for your leadership in bringing this important legislation to the floor for a vote. As survivors and advocates dedicated to eradicating human trafficking, we are grateful for your commitment to ensuring that websites that knowingly facilitate sex trafficking will at long last, be held accountable for their actions.

Sincerely,

1. Shared Hope International  
Arlington, VA
2. Rights4Girls  
Washington, DC
3. Covenant House International  
New York, NY

4. ECPAT USA  
Washington, DC
5. World Without Exploitation  
New York, NY
6. Mary Mazzio & I AM JANE DOE Community  
Boston, MA
7. Courtney's House  
Washington, DC
8. Legal Momentum  
New York, NY
9. Equality Now  
New York, NY
10. National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE)  
Washington, DC
11. My Life My Choice  
Boston, MA
12. Truckers Against Trafficking  
Englewood, CO
13. Sanctuary For Families  
New York, NY
14. Trafficking in America Task Force  
Gainesville, FL
15. CSA San Diego County  
El Cajon, CA
16. Villanova Law School Institute on Commercial Sexual Exploitation  
Villanova, PA
17. National Council of Jewish Women New York  
New York, NY
18. Dawn's Place  
Philadelphia, PA
19. Child's World America  
Villanova, PA
20. Freedom From Exploitation, Inc.  
San Diego, CA

21. Women's Justice NOW  
New York, NY
22. Children's Law Center of California  
Sacramento, CA
23. Carole Landis Foundation For Social Action  
Haverford, PA
24. The Voices and Faces Project  
Chicago, IL
25. NH Traffick Free Coalition  
Milford, NH
26. The Samaritan Women  
Baltimore, MD
27. Free to Thrive  
San Diego, CA
28. Enough Is Enough  
Great Falls, VA
29. The Lynch Foundation for Children  
Ranchero Santa Fe, CA
30. Bags of Hope Ministries  
Boston, MA
31. Hope Ranch For Women  
Wichita, KS
32. Wings of Refuge  
Iowa Falls, IA
33. North Star Initiative  
Lititz, PA
34. Zoë Ministries  
Greenwood, DE
35. Abolition Ohio  
Dayton, OH
36. Arrow Child & Family Ministries  
Baltimore, MD
37. Consumer Watchdog  
Washington, DC

38. Airline Ambassadors International  
Arlington, VA
39. Journey Out  
Los Angeles, CA
40. The Ricky Martin Foundation  
San Juan, PR
41. Praesidium Partners  
Richmond, VA
42. Worthwhile Wear  
Silverdale, PA
43. Amirah  
Woburn, MA
44. Saved in America  
Oceanside, CA
45. Awaken  
Reno, NV
46. Ala Kuola  
Honolulu, HI
47. Glory House of Miami  
Miami, FL
48. Generate Hope  
San Diego, CA
49. Refuge for Women Las Vegas  
Las Vegas, NV

### **Individual Signatures**

J.S.  
Child sex trafficking survivor  
Chattanooga, TN

Tom and Nacole S.  
Parents of a child sex trafficking survivor  
Chattanooga, TN

Kubiiki Pride  
Mother of a child sex trafficking survivor  
Boston, MA

Ambassador Swanee Hunt

Marian Hatcher  
Senior Project Manager/Human Trafficking Coordinator  
Cook County Sheriff's Office  
Chicago, IL

Penny M. Venetis  
Clinical Prof. of Law / Director, International Human Rights Clinic  
Rutgers Law School  
Newark, NJ

Michelle Madden Dempsey  
Professor of Law  
Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law  
Villanova, PA

Donna M. Hughes  
Professor, Eleanor M and Oscar M Carlson Endowed Chair  
University of Rhode Island  
Kingston, RI

Jody Raphael  
Senior Research Fellow  
DePaul University College of Law  
Chicago, IL

Audrey Rogers  
Professor of Law  
Elisabeth Haub School of Law  
New York, NY

Katha Pollitt  
Columnist, The Nation  
New York, NY

Sarah Robinson  
Public Defender  
Defender Association of Philadelphia  
Philadelphia, PA

Dayle Ann Hunt  
Playwright  
The Trauma Brain Project  
Chicago, IL



February 26, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

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Office of the Democratic Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204 The Capitol  
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47. Glory House of Miami  
Miami, FL
48. Generate Hope  
San Diego, CA
49. Refuge for Women Las Vegas  
Las Vegas, NV
50. Girls Inc.  
Washington, DC
51. New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Concord, NH
52. National Association of Counsel for Children  
Aurora, CO
53. New Hope Youth Ministries  
Russellville, AR
54. Living in Freedom Together Inc.  
Worcester, MA

55. Her Song Jacksonville  
Jacksonville, FL
56. Convo Church  
Reno, NV
57. The Daughter Project  
Perrysburg, OH
58. New Life Refuge Ministries  
Corpus Christy, TX
59. LifeWire  
Bellevue, WA
60. Hope Ranch for Women  
Wichita, KS
61. The Lighthouse Community Center  
Lynchburg, VA
62. Artworks for Freedom  
Washington, DC
63. Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation  
Chicago, IL
64. Stolen Youth  
Seattle, WA
65. Prevention Works Joint Task Force & Coalition  
Conyers, GA
66. Engedi Refuge Ministries  
Lynden, WA
67. True Justice International  
New Bern, NC
68. Girls with Grit  
Austin, TX
69. eWomenNetwork  
Dallas, TX
70. ExposeSexEdNow  
Charleston, SC
71. National Council of Jewish Women  
Washington, DC

72. TraffickStop  
Burleson, TX
73. Survivors for Solutions  
Denver, CO
74. Family Watch International  
Gilbert, AZ
75. American Family Association of Pennsylvania  
Franklin, PA
76. Christian Action League of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN
77. Restored Hope Ministries  
Dallas, TX
78. In Our Backyard  
Redmond, OR
79. Universal Peace Federation  
Tarrytown, NY
80. International Athletes' Abolition Mission  
Havelock, NC
81. Being a Voice  
Philadelphia, PA
82. iCare4, Inc.  
Evans, GA
83. Delaware Family Policy Council  
Dover, DE
84. Institute on Religion and Democracy  
Washington, DC
85. New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking  
Shorthills, NJ
86. S.H.A.D.E. Movement  
Emeryville, CA
87. Florida Abolitionist  
Orlando, FL
88. The Refuge for DMST  
Austin, TX

89. Girls Against Porn & Human Trafficking/Men Against Porn  
Nashville, TN
90. Second Life Tennessee  
Chattanooga, TN
91. Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
Silver Spring, MD
92. Girls Educational & Mentoring Services (GEMS)  
New York, NY
93. Graham Windam  
Brooklyn, NY
94. National Council of Jewish Women—Essex County  
Livingston, NJ
95. SeraphimGLOBAL  
Arlington, VA
96. Protect Young Minds  
Richland, WA
97. Refuge City  
Richardson, TX
98. West Coast Children's Clinic  
Oakland, CA
99. National Crittenton Foundation  
Portland, OR
100. National Decency Coalition  
Mount Juliet, TN
101. Beloved Haven  
Moyock, NC
102. Blue Ridge Fellows  
Roanoke, VA

### **Individual Signatures**

J.S.  
Child sex trafficking survivor  
Chattanooga, TN

Tom and Nacole S.  
Parents of a child sex trafficking survivor  
Chattanooga, TN

Kubiiki Pride  
Mother of a child sex trafficking survivor  
Boston, MA

Ambassador Swanee Hunt

Marian Hatcher  
Senior Project Manager/Human Trafficking Coordinator  
Cook County Sheriff's Office  
Chicago, IL

Penny M. Venetis  
Clinical Prof. of Law / Director, International Human Rights Clinic  
Rutgers Law School  
Newark, NJ

Michelle Madden Dempsey  
Professor of Law  
Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law  
Villanova, PA

Donna M. Hughes  
Professor, Eleanor M and Oscar M Carlson Endowed Chair  
University of Rhode Island  
Kingston, RI

Jody Raphael  
Senior Research Fellow  
DePaul University College of Law  
Chicago, IL

Audrey Rogers  
Professor of Law  
Elisabeth Haub School of Law  
New York, NY

Katha Pollitt  
Columnist, The Nation  
New York, NY

Sarah Robinson  
Public Defender  
Defender Association of Philadelphia  
Philadelphia, PA

Dayle Ann Hunt  
Playwright  
The Trauma Brain Project  
Chicago, IL

Kathleen Mitchell  
Founder of the DIGNITY Diversion Program  
Catholic Charities  
Phoenix, AZ

Nicole O'Banion  
Ombudsman for Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault & Human Trafficking  
Nevada Attorney General's Office  
Reno, NV

Dawn Jones  
Survivor  
The Lighthouse Community Center  
Lynchburg, VA

Mary Dreisbach  
Advocate  
Valley Against Sex Trafficking (VAST)  
Allentown, PA

Tammy Gilden  
Senior Policy Associate  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
New York, NY

Angela Pena  
Pediatric RN  
Special Kids Care  
San Antonio, TX

Darlene Pawlik  
Survivor of child sex trafficking  
Concord, NH

Barbara Amaya, CDA, PhD  
Survivor  
Arlington, VA

Nancy Mills, MS, LPC  
Therapist  
Bridgeton, NJ

Joseph Prud'homme  
Associate Professor of Political Science  
Washington College  
Chestertown, MD

Jill Manning, PhD  
Dr. Jill Manning, PLLC  
Louisville, CO

Mary Graw Leary, JD  
Professor  
Catholic University, Columbus School of Law  
Alexandria, VA

Autumn Burris  
Survivor Leader  
Denver, CO

Nikki Bell  
Survivor Leader  
Worcester, MA

Jen Spry  
Survivor Leader  
Philadelphia, PA

Kenneth Cooper  
Pastor, West EFC  
Wichita, KS

Derek Thompson  
Regional Advocate  
More Too Life  
Sarasota, FL

Jahyda Iris Cortes-Villegas  
Case Manager  
Worthwhile Wear: The Well

Lisa Larson  
Mother, Convent of the Sacred Heart  
New York, NY



## NATIONAL CENTER ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

EndSexualExploitation.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 23, 2018

Contact: Katherine Blakeman  
202-393-7245  
[katherine@ncose.com](mailto:katherine@ncose.com)

### ***Kentucky State Legislators Call on Congress to Amend CDA to Fight Online Sex Trafficking***

*Statement by Lisa L. Thompson, Vice President, Research & Education, NCOSE*

**Washington, DC** – Today Kentucky’s House of Representatives unanimously signaled to the U.S. Congress that it is time to stem the burgeoning growth of online sex trafficking by amending the Communications Decency Act (CDA). In an 83-0 vote, Kentucky’s legislature [passed a resolution](#) sending the unequivocal message to Congress that all those who facilitate sex trafficking must be held accountable—including website operators with business models built on sexual exploitation. The National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE) applauds this action, as well as Reps. Donna Mayfield (Retired, U.S. Marshals Service) and Melinda Prunty for spearheading this effort.

“People are not objects to be sold online,” **said Lisa L. Thompson, Vice President of Research and Education for the National Center on Sexual Exploitation.**

“The Kentucky House of Representatives has gone on the record in support of this fundamental human principle. Now is the time for the U.S. Congress to do the same.”

“In a tragic series of court cases favoring Backpage.com—a classified advertising website that facilitates sex trafficking—the courts have interpreted Section 230 of the Communication Decency Act to give third-party hosting sites carte blanche immunity for everything and anything that occurs online. This includes turning the Internet into a modern-day auction block for sexually trafficked women and children.”

“This impunity from the law has resulted in mass sexploitation,” **Thompson continued.** “In Seattle alone, [law enforcement has identified more than 130](#)



Charles B. Wang International  
Children's Building  
699 Prince Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-3175  
U.S.A.

Telephone 703.224.2150

Facsimile 703.224.2122

[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

[www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com)

**STATEMENT BY JOHN F. CLARK  
PRESIDENT AND CEO  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED  
CHILDREN**

**Regarding House Action on Legislation to  
Provide Justice to Child Sex Trafficking Victims**

**February 23, 2018**

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children is pleased that the House of Representatives is scheduled to consider Representative Ann Wagner's *Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act* (H.R. 1865) next week. We strongly urge all Members to support the crucial amendment offered by Representative Mimi Walters, which makes long needed updates to the Communications Decency Act (CDA) to ensure that children trafficked for sex online can have their day in court against online traffickers and to clarify that there is no legal protection for anyone who participates in the sex trafficking of children.

We especially thank Senators Rob Portman and Richard Blumenthal for their powerful leadership in authoring the *Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act* (S. 1693), which is the basis for Representative Walters' amendment, and for their ongoing support of the child survivors, their families, and the coalition of advocacy organizations who serve these survivors.

We look forward to continuing to work with Members of Congress to bring this legislation to a vote on the House Floor and through the Senate so that it can get to the President's desk to be signed into law.

Other Offices  
California  
Florida  
New York  
Texas



February 23, 2018

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan  
Speaker of the House of  
Representatives  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Charles B. Wang International  
Children's Building  
699 Prince Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-3175  
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Speaker and Madam Leader:

As President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), I am writing today regarding consideration of the *Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (H.R. 1865)* in the House of Representatives.

NCMEC has long championed legislative efforts that will provide justice to children who have been trafficked for sex online and we believe that any final legislation must include amendments to the Communications Decency Act (CDA) to clarify that there is no immunity for anyone who participates in the crime of online sex trafficking. More specifically, legislation must allow trafficking survivors to have their day in court and empower state Attorneys General to join the battle against those who are participating in the online sex trafficking of children in their states.

For these reasons, we strongly urge all Members to support the amendment being offered by Representative Mimi Walters, which makes these long needed updates to the CDA. As you know, Representative Walters' amendment is narrow in scope, and is based on Senators Rob Portman and Richard Blumenthal's *Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (S. 1693)*, which NCMEC supports.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and other congressional leaders to pass this important legislation in the House and the Senate so that it can get to the President's desk to be signed into law. Thank you again for your leadership on this issue and your continued dedication to the safety of our nation's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John F. Clark".

John F. Clark  
President and CEO

Other Offices  
California  
Florida  
New York  
Texas

Telephone 703.224.2150

Facsimile 703.224.2122

[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

[www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com)



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Lauren Hersh  
World Without Exploitation  
347-385-5595  
[lauren@worldwithoutexploitation.org](mailto:lauren@worldwithoutexploitation.org)

Rachel Lohman  
917-626-9189  
[rachel.lohman@worldwithoutexploitation.org](mailto:rachel.lohman@worldwithoutexploitation.org)

### **NATIONAL ANTI-TRAFFICKING COALITION URGES CONGRESS TO PASS FOSTA WITH SECTION 230 PROVISION TO CURB ONLINE SEX TRAFFICKING**

***As Internet Demand Explodes, World Without Exploitation Calls on National Lawmakers to Support Survivors and Stem the Tide of Human Trafficking by Holding Websites Accountable***

**NEW YORK, NY – FEBRUARY 26, 2018** – World Without Exploitation (WorldWE), the national coalition to end human trafficking and exploitation, today urges members of Congress to pass legislation that would clarify Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act and allow state law enforcement and survivors to seek justice against websites that knowingly engage in facilitating human trafficking. The bill will help disrupt sex trafficking in the United States, much of which has shifted from the streets to the Internet.

The Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017 (FOSTA), H.R. 1865, was introduced by Rep. Ann Wagner (R-MO) and now includes a crucial amendment by Rep. Mimi Walters (R-CA) that seeks to close a legal loophole in Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act that allows websites that host online sex ads to operate with impunity. The Walters amendment echoes language from the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act of 2017 (SESTA), S. 1693 sponsored in the Senate by Rob Portman (R-OH) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT).

“Every day, thousands of children and adults are being illegally bought and sold online, and the websites that facilitate these transactions have been able to hide behind legislation that was never designed to shelter this kind of activity,” said Lauren Hersh, national director of WorldWE. “WorldWE and our members are incredibly grateful to Reps. Wagner and Walters and Sens. Portman and Blumenthal, among many others, for listening to the voices of survivors and driving meaningful change with so much bipartisan support. The urgency we are seeing to stop human trafficking at the highest levels of our government is truly inspiring.”

(more)

With the growth of the Internet, human trafficking that once happened mainly on street corners has largely shifted online. According to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, 73 percent of the 10,000 child sex trafficking reports it receives from the public each year involve ads on the website Backpage.com. The anonymity and ease with which victims can be bought and sold on the Internet has created a multi-billion-dollar industry, and a tremendous surge in exploitation across the United States.

"The illegal sex trade is no less odious simply because it is operating on the Web," said Anne K. Ream, founding co-chair of WorldWE. "Wherever it happens, whenever it happens, human trafficking is an industry in which profits are built on human pain. We need public policies that are responsive to the current face of trafficking, which is why passage of FOSTA with the Walters amendment is so critical."

"We urge the House to pass FOSTA with the Walters amendment and send the bill to the Senate for adoption," said Nikki Bell, founder and director of Living in Freedom Together (LIFT), a survivor-led organization. "We are hoping after today, we will be one step closer to bringing justice to survivors and disrupting the profitable model of online trafficking in our country."

To learn more about WorldWE, hear survivor stories, donate, and join our movement to create a world without exploitation, please visit <http://www.worldwithoutexploitation.org/>.

### **About World Without Exploitation**

World Without Exploitation (WorldWE) is a national coalition of more than 100 organizations and individuals committed to human rights, civil rights, and gender justice. WorldWE's mission is to create a world where no person is bought, sold or exploited. The coalition aims to create a culture where those who have been trafficked or sexually exploited are treated as victims of a crime, not criminals themselves, while those who purchase, sell or exploit another human being are punished.

**# # #**