



4/7/017

Re: Support SB 72

Dear Senate Health and Social Services Committee,

We are writing in support of Senate Bill 72, which we expect to reduce sex trafficking of youth and reduce the number of adults who find themselves with few viable options for survival outside of prostitution in Alaska. The Community United for Safety and Protection is a group of current and former sex workers, sex trafficking victims, and allies working towards safety and protection for everyone in Alaska's sex trade.

Senate Bill 72 is long overdue and will prevent and provide an avenue to address discrimination against Alaskans who are lesbian, gay, bi, and transgender.

Lesbian, gay, bi, and transgender youth are disproportionately likely to experience homelessness and disproportionately likely to experience discrimination in accessing shelter and then turn to trading sex for survival. Youth like this (known as "domestic minor sex trafficking victims") make up the majority of sex trafficking victims in the United States. A 2015 study* of 283 LGBTQ youth engaged in survival sex work in New York City found that youth engaged in survival sex work "after being kicked out by their families or being denied services at homeless shelters." Eliminating discrimination against LGBTQ youth by shelters and other crisis services will prevent a large percentage of sex trafficking of youth in Alaska.

LGBT adults, particularly transgender adults, face discrimination in employment that can leave them with few or no viable options outside of sex work. One 2015 study** found that 69% of transgender sex workers had recently experienced a negative job outcome. Alaskan research*** has found that employment discrimination is a causal factor for transgender Alaskans entering the sex industry. Transgender sex workers face discrimination within the sex

industry in the form of lower pay, less access to safety tools, and are targeted for violence and arrest at a higher rate. In 2014, the only sex worker to be arrested for prostitution more than once in Alaska was a homeless transgender woman in Anchorage who may have had no other opportunities for economic survival.

In addition to reducing sex trafficking, this bill will reduce money spent on police investigations, incarcerating sex workers and sex trafficking victims, and prevent people from becoming a financial burden on the state after incarceration.

Please vote yes on Senate Bill 72.

Thank you,

Terra Burns
Maxine Doogan
Kat McElroy
Crystal Godby

*Banuelos, Connor, Dank, Madden, Mora, Ritchie, Yahner, & Yu. Surviving the Streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ Youth, YMSM, and YWSW Engaged in Survival Sex.

** Elspeth, Hickey, & Patterson. Meaningful Work: Transgender Experiences in the Sex Trade.

*** Burns. People in Alaska's Sex Trade: Their Lived Experiences and Policy Recommendations.