



Governor Michael J. Dunleavy
STATE OF ALASKA

January 24, 2020

The Honorable Cathy Giessel
Senate President
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear President Giessel:

Under the authority of Article III, Section 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill relating to sex trafficking and human trafficking; establishing the crime of “Patron of a Victim of Sex Trafficking;” and creating a process for a victim of sex trafficking who has been convicted of prostitution to have that conviction vacated.

Alaska’s sex trafficking and human trafficking statutes do not adequately address the serious nature of these offenses or provide sufficient protections for underage victims. The language in these statutes is archaic and no longer addresses the realities faced by individuals who are forced into the labor or sex trade; creating situations where victims are unaided and perpetrators go undetected.

The proposed legislation will restructure the human trafficking and sex trafficking statutes to better address the realities of how these offenses are committed and protect underage victims. The bill increases the penalties for all forms of trafficking, leaving the most serious classification for those who use force or traffic an underage person. Additionally, sex trafficking of all degrees will be a sex offense subject to the increased penalties for sex offenses and require registration as a sex offender. The legislation also establishes the new crime of “Patron of a Victim of Sex Trafficking.” While it is crucial to target those who traffic individuals, it is equally important to address those who create a demand for victims of sex trafficking; specifically underage victims of sex trafficking.

Finally, the legislation establishes a mechanism by which a person who has been convicted of prostitution can get that conviction vacated if they were a victim of sex trafficking at the time of the prostitution offense. The threat of being charged with a crime is often a tactic that traffickers will use to continue to control their victims. It is important for society to recognize that these victims often have no other choice, and they should not be treated as criminals when they are, in fact, victims themselves.

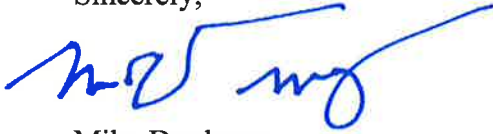
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Human trafficking and sex trafficking are insidious, and these crimes ruin lives. It is time that our laws adequately address the devastation this predatory conduct has on our society and protect those who need it most. I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Dunleavy", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Dunleavy
Governor

Enclosure