



March 3, 2020

The Honorable Zack Fields

Chair, House State Affairs Committee
State Capitol Room 412
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Proposed Human Trafficking Bill (SB 165/HB 225)

Dear Mr. Fields:

Covenant House Alaska supports the proposed Human Trafficking Bill (SB 165/HB 225) but would like see the bill expanded to include the following:

- **Special protections and a service path for minors (Safe Harbor) to be sure they are treated as victims and not criminals. Safe harbor would decriminalize commercial sex acts for all children under 18 years old and immediately place the child within the Office of Children's Services and/or the Department of Juvenile Justice's Jurisdiction. Law enforcement would also conduct an investigation for trafficking or child abuse and there would be a required 48 hour "protective hold" of the child. These children would never be arrested and will never have a criminal arrest or conviction for prostitution on their record.**
- **Mandatory training on sex and labor trafficking for law enforcement, prosecutors and judges.**
- **The vacating convictions portion of the proposed legislation expanded to other crimes committed while being a trafficking victim including drug possession and theft.**

We are grateful for the work the committees and other state officials and their teams have invested in this piece of legislation. We are excited about the prospect of trafficking statute reform and believe that stiffer penalties for traffickers and patrons of those who have been trafficked, along with the rewrite of the labor trafficking statues and the vacation of prostitution charges for trafficking victims are all positive steps forward. The SB 165/HB 225 proposed statute changes along with the above recommended additions will provide better ability to identify and serve trafficking victims, to support them as they attempt to resume their lives as survivors, and due to better support see victims willing to testify against their perpetrators and produce more convictions.

With your support we hope SB 165/HB 225 with additions are signed into law this session.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison E. Kear". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison E. Kear, Chief Executive Officer
Covenant House Alaska