



March 29, 2022

Re: Opposing SB 189

Dear Senator Holland,

We are writing to oppose Senate Bill 189 and Committee Substitute version I due to our ongoing concerns about how it will impact public safety and constitutionally protected privacy rights. As currently written, SB189 will further isolate victims and witnesses, pushing them farther away from working with law enforcement to stop predators.

The Community United for Safety and Protection is a group of Alaskan sex workers, sex trafficking survivors, and our allies working towards safety and protection for people in Alaska's sex trades. We lobbied successfully for improvements to Alaska's prostitution and sex trafficking statutes included in SB91, and for similar enfranchisement to the Municipality of Anchorage's prostitution code.

We appreciate the elimination of the outrageous definitions in the original bill, but there are still significant problems with Sex Trafficking in the Third Degree - see Section 3, 11.41.350 (2). Under this definition, sex workers who share work space would unduly face felony charges for having a Place of Prostitution. Sex workers and sex trafficking survivors share hotel rooms or use each other's homes for safety, so that we don't end up alone in a hotel room with a predator like Alaskan serial killers Brian Smith, Israel Keyes, or Robert Hansen. The current and previous

version of the trafficking statute have had provisions to prevent sex workers from being charged with sex trafficking for sharing space.

Additionally, with the move of the sex trafficking statute to 11.41, Offenses Against a Person, moral crimes like having a place of prostitution or a prostitution enterprise should not be included. Forcing or coercing someone into prostitution is a crime against a person. Having a place of prostitution only offends upon the morals of crusaders. In 2016 CUSP worked with the Hayes Research Group to conduct a voter poll and 58% of Alaskans said they do not want state resources to be spent arresting consensual adults for prostitution, that includes our clients.

Criminalizing sex workers and sex trafficking survivors for normal safety practices prevents the reporting of sex trafficking. It discourages sex workers and victims from cooperating with police investigations. Currently sex workers and sex trafficking survivors have immunity from misdemeanor prostitution charges when reporting heinous crimes, but there is no immunity in this bill to allow sex workers to report violent crimes without being charged with felony sex trafficking for sharing a hotel room so in this way, the bill falls short.

SB189 would make clients of sex workers felons, which creates another a barrier for victims of sex trafficking that are seeking help. In criminalizing some of the only people that victims of sex trafficking have contact with, clients would excessively risk being charged with a felony if they report sex trafficking to police. This essentially creates conditions where sex trafficking is more likely to continue without intervention which is the opposite of what we all want. This bill should instead find ways for the police to partner with clients to increase reporting of sex trafficking.

Senate Bill 189 also misses the opportunity to add fraud or coercion to the sex trafficking statute to be inline with the federal definition. Definitions of force, fraud, coercion, or minors are the bare minimum that should be included in a state trafficking law to be effective.

We have prepared a suggested Committee Substitute that would address the issues with this bill and dramatically decrease or eliminate sex trafficking in Alaska.

Thank you,  
Maxine Doogan  
Terra Burns  
Community United For Safety and Protection

