

DEDICATE FUNDS FOR SHELTER & SERVICES  
FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, PRINT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

NAME (print)

ADDRESS AND ZIP CODE

Email

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October 27, 2010

Mayor Sam Adams  
Commissioner Dan Saltzman  
Commissioner Amanda Fritz  
Commissioner Nick Fish  
Commissioner Randy Leonard  
City of Portland, Oregon

Mr. Mayor and City of Portland Commissioners:

Juvenile Rights Project, Inc. is a non-profit public interest law firm that has been dedicated to serving foster children and at-risk youth since 1985. JRP has served tens of thousands of children and youth and advocated for policies that protect them and promote their success.

While the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children is not a new problem, it is a problem that is becoming more acute. JRP supports the proposed resolution and changes to city ordinance in order to invest more funds in services that will protect the victims of trafficking and provide the services they need to permanently escape exploitation. And we thank Commissioner Saltzman for bringing this proposal forward.

**This proposal is important in drawing a clearer distinction between those who promote, compel, or create the demand for prostitution and the individuals who are often coerced into offering or agreeing to prostitution.** There is an inherent conflict between current prostitution statutes and minors' incapacity to consent to sexual acts under Oregon law. Federal law, The Trafficking Victim Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, defines any child engaged in a commercial sex act as a victim of a severe form of sex trafficking.

The commercial exploitation of children is an issue of child protection and child welfare, yet it has been viewed and handled as a criminal matter for the children involved. **The treatment of victims of child sex abuse as criminals stems in part from a dearth of resources to help these victims.** Oregon is fortunate to already have the tools within its dependency code to take prostituted children into protective custody. Better training of Law Enforcement and Department of Human Services personnel could facilitate the utilization of the dependency statute to remove children from dangerous situations and support them as victims and witnesses.

This ordinance is a down payment -- an investment -- in building the kinds of resources that have been sorely lacking in our community. Having necessary resources available to provide protection, shelter, counseling and other services will hopefully enable us to end the backwards treatment of child victims of commercial sex trafficking.

Thank you for supporting this important measure.

Sincerely,

Mark McKechnie, Executive Director