



Resolution: Regarding the critical importance of improving protections for child sex trafficking victims

Ratified: November 2016

WHEREAS child sex trafficking is a form of modern slavery that exploits some of the most vulnerable members of society;

WHEREAS online exploitation has exponentially expanded the market for child victims who are bought and sold through online classified websites and other online venues developed around the commercial sex market;

WHEREAS child sex trafficking victims suffer serious trauma resulting from commercial sexual exploitation, regardless of whether they have an identified trafficker;

WHEREAS buyers of sex with children are central perpetrators in the crime of sex trafficking and failure to address the conduct of buyers as a crime of sex trafficking creates barriers to critical protections, services and resources for child victims;

WHEREAS children, who cannot consent to engage in commercial sex, must not be criminalized for commercial sexual conduct that is inherent to their victimization;

WHEREAS children who are exploited through commercial sex are victims of sex trafficking in need of specialized, trauma-informed services in lieu of being arrested and detained for their own victimization; and

WHEREAS strong state and local laws are critical to preventing children from becoming victims of sex trafficking and for protecting those children who have been exploited; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that members of the National Foundation for Women Legislators—

- (1) strongly condemn the crime of child sex trafficking;
- (2) recognize the need for state and local government to develop mandatory response laws on behalf of child sex trafficking victims that ensure access to services and resources for recovery;
- (3) call on every state and local government to set a clear goal and plan for eliminating criminalization of minors for commercial sexual conduct and other conduct that is a result of their trafficking victimization; and
- (4) urge every state and local government to statutorily recognize all commercially sexually exploited children as child sex trafficking victims and align the state sex trafficking law with the reality that children are exploited by both traffickers and buyers by ensuring both types of offenders are acknowledged as perpetrators under the state's core sex trafficking law.