



NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

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House Cracks Down on Those Who Pay for Sex with Minors

HB 2714 creates crime of patronizing a prostitute, increases fines, eliminates ignorance of age as defense

SALEM – The Oregon House today passed HB 2714, the first bill in a package championed by Representative Carolyn Tomei (D-Milwaukie) to crack down on the sex trafficking of children. The bill passed unanimously.

“Sex trafficking of children is a very important issue to me, to my constituents and residents in our state. Oregon has gained the reputation as a hub for sex trafficking of children,” said Rep. Tomei. “Buyers of sex just keep victimizing these kids over and over again, with few consequences. This bill will change that.”

HB 2714 creates the crime of patronizing a prostitute, applying to those who purchase sex. The bill increases fines for purchasing sex from children: \$10,000 for the first offense, \$20,000 the second time, and for third and subsequent offenses, \$20,000 plus 30 days in jail. Finally, HB 2714 states that ignorance of age cannot be used as a defense.

“I am here to say, sex trafficking of minors is a problem where you live,” said Representative Greg Matthews (D-Gresham). “This is a much needed bill that can lead to better lives for the young victims in communities across Oregon.”

“This bill is a long time coming. It is important to let people know that we find this behavior unacceptable,” said Representative Deborah Boone (D-Cannon Beach). “I support this bill and all efforts to combat the sex trafficking of minors in our state.”

Other bills intended to combat the sex trafficking of children include:

- A bill, SB 425, which makes it easier for law enforcement to prosecute pimps, those traffickers who control these youngsters;
- A bill, SB 428, which works to educate law enforcement about the problems associated with these children, helping law enforcement to recognize these kids as victims, not criminals, and direct them to appropriate shelter and treatment; and

- A bill, SB 426, which seeks grants to develop the specialized shelter and treatment that these young victims need.

HB 2714 now moves to the Senate for consideration.

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