



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

Oregon State Legislature
State Capitol
Salem, OR

NEWS RELEASE

April 14, 2011

CONTACT: Molly Woon (503) 986-1074
molly.woon@state.or.us

Senate Bill cracks down on child sex traffickers, closes loophole *SB 425 eliminates defense that a pimp is unaware of a minor's age*

SALEM – The Oregon Senate took action this morning on legislation that will eliminate the defense that a person who compels a minor to prostitute is unaware of their age. SB 425 is a key piece of the Senate Democrats' work to crack down on sex trafficking.

“SB 425 will result in harsher punishments for an appalling crime,” said Senator Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene), who carried the bill on the floor. “We need to clearly communicate that forcing a young person into prostitution is inexcusable and people that participate in this activity will be held accountable for their actions.”

Currently, in order to convict someone of the crime of compelling a minor to engage in prostitution, the state must prove that a pimp knows that the person they are forcing to prostitute is under eighteen. SB 425 removes that requirement and eliminates the defense that the defendant did not know the minor's age or that the defendant reasonably believed the minor was older than eighteen years of age.

“Claiming ignorance of a victim's age in an unacceptable defense for this crime,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “Senate Democrats recognize the seriousness and severity of this issue and are taking action to make sure young people are not forced into prostitution and that those who facilitate prostitution are punished for their actions.”

Victims of human trafficking are young children, teenagers, men and women. Approximately 800,000 to 900,000 victims annually are trafficked across international borders worldwide, and between 14,500 and 17,500 of those victims are trafficked into the U.S., according to the U.S. Department of State. Human trafficking victims are subjected to force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor.

SB 425 now goes to the House for consideration.

###

For more information on the Senate Majority Caucus, please visit oregonsenatedemocrats.com