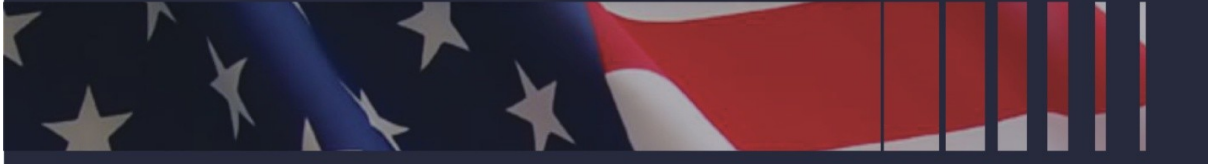


PROTECTED INNOCENCE INITIATIVE

STATE ACTION. NATIONAL CHANGE.



Mississippi State Facts

Criminalization of DMST

1. Mississippi's state human trafficking law criminalizes the sex trafficking of minors under 18 through prostitution, pornography and stripping. It does not require the proof of force, fraud, or coercion.

Criminal Provisions Addressing Demand

2. Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood was one of 51 Attorneys General who signed a letter to Backpage.com calling on the company to disclose its efforts to identify and delete advertisements that facilitate sex trafficking, specifically of minors.¹
3. The state human trafficking law does not clearly apply to the purchase of sex acts with a minor, although certain language might subject the buyer of prostitution or sexual performance with a minor to prosecution.
4. In July 2009, Christopher Cockrell of Amory was convicted of attempted sex trafficking of a child under federal law after arranging to have sex with who he believed was a 15-yr-old girl. The "girl" was an undercover police officer.²

Criminal Provisions for Traffickers

5. In 2004, Mariece Sims and Dwayne Thigpen were convicted of federal kidnapping, transporting, and trafficking a 16-year old for sex. The girl was abducted in Arkansas, and then trafficked in Gulfport and other cities in the state.³
6. State law does not subject convicted sex traffickers to forfeiture of criminal proceeds. Traffickers may be required to pay restitution and could be subject to civil actions by victims.
7. Sex trafficking is not an enumerated grounds for termination of parental rights under Mississippi law, leaving the children of traffickers at continuing risk through the relationship.

Protective Provisions for Child Victims

8. Minors can be arrested for prostitution because the law does not apply only to adults; this is in conflict with their status as victims under the human trafficking law.

Criminal Justice Tools for investigation and Prosecution

9. Training for law enforcement officers on identification and investigation of child sex trafficking is not required, presenting a critical gap in preparing law enforcement to identify sex trafficking crimes and victims.

1 <http://www.tn.gov/attorneygeneral/cases/backpage/backpageletter.pdf>

2 <http://www.fbi.gov/kansascity/press-releases/2009/kc071609a.htm>

3 http://www2.fbi.gov/innolost/case_sum.htm