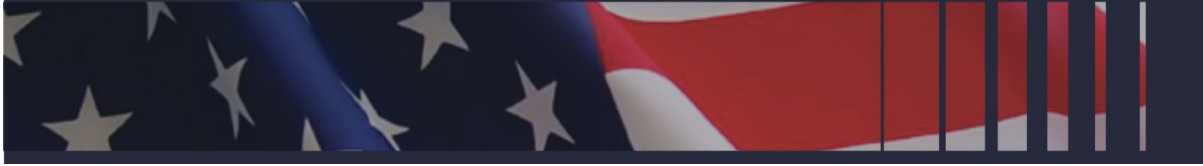


# PROTECTED INNOCENCE INITIATIVE

STATE ACTION. NATIONAL CHANGE.



## Missouri State Facts

### Criminalization of DMST

1. Missouri has a separate law addressing sex trafficking of a child and clearly defines a minor under the age of 18 used in a commercial sex act as a human trafficking victim without regard to use of force, fraud, or coercion.

### Criminal Provisions Addressing Demand

2. Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster 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.<sup>1</sup>
3. The state sex trafficking law can be applied to buyers who cause a minor to engage in a commercial sex act. Additionally, the solicitation of prostitution law distinguishes between buying commercial sex acts with adults versus minors, providing enhanced penalties for buying sex with a minor under 18.
4. Seven defendants have been convicted in the nation's first-ever federal prosecution of attempted buyers of commercial sex acts with minors under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act as a result of Operation Guardian Angel, a unique law enforcement sting operation using the Internet to target demand for prostitution with children in Kansas City.

### Criminal Provisions for Traffickers

5. Sex trafficking has been actively prosecuted through the U.S. Attorney's Office resulting in many federal prosecutions of traffickers and buyers in Missouri. A couple from Minnesota pled guilty in June 2011 to federal charges of enticing a 16-year-old runaway from South Dakota into prostitution throughout the Midwest, including Kansas City, advertising commercial sex acts with her on *Backpage.com*<sup>2</sup> and in October 2011, Eric Gathings pled guilty in federal court to child sex trafficking after recruiting a homeless minor and selling her for sex in exchange for a place to live.<sup>3</sup>
6. A federal grand jury indicted five Missouri men in September 2010 on federal sex trafficking charges for the sexual slavery and torture of a mentally deficient minor that lasted eight years until she suffered cardiac arrest and was admitted to the hospital. The victim was branded with tattoos, forced to sign a "sex slave contract" and engage in pornographic activity online.<sup>4</sup>

### Protective Provisions for Child Victims

7. Missouri provides statutory procedures to identify human trafficking victims, and law enforcement must notify the department of social services and juvenile justice authorities when a minor victim is identified. However, prostitution offenses are not limited in application to adults and do not identify a minor engaged in prostitution as a victim of sex trafficking, which might result in disparate treatment for some minors identified as offenders rather than victims of sex trafficking.

---

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

2 <http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/47b686c2-96b8-11e0-9e1c-0019bb30f31a.html>

3 <http://www.justice.gov/usao/mow/news2011/gathings.ple.html>

4 <http://www.justice.gov/usao/mow/news2011/bagley2.ind.html>