

S. 596: Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Deterrence and Victims Support Act of 2011

Status:

Referred to Senate Judiciary Committee on March 18, 2011

To track this bill, visit: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s112-596>

What you need to know about this legislation:

- It will provide \$2m to \$2.5m a year in funding to six state and local pilot projects to serve and shelter child victims of sex trafficking.
- Applying entities must have a multidisciplinary, collaborative plan to combat the sex trafficking of minors.
- 67% of funds must be used for direct services and shelter for victims.
- Funds can be used to increase law enforcement efforts to combat the sex trafficking of children.
- This is a bipartisan bill.
- The legislation is sponsored by Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Senator John Cornyn (R-TX).

How this bill will help address existing domestic minor sex trafficking challenges:

Challenge: There is little collaboration and communication between the various agencies and organizations that encounter or work with sex trafficked children. This lack of collaboration is a major impediment to efficiency and finding workable solutions.

How this bill helps: This legislation requires multidisciplinary collaboration from grantees.

Challenge: Law enforcement has expressed frustration that when they discover an exploited child, there is nowhere safe to place him/her for help.

How this bill helps: With at least 67% of funding required for shelter and services for victims, the grant locations will be required to establish safe shelter for victims.

Challenge: Sex trafficked children have a multitude of needs ranging from post-traumatic stress and depression to STDs, substance abuse and chronic illness. They also may not have a safe, appropriate home to return to. There are few programs appropriate to address their needs. As a result, they are caught in a cycle of abuse and arrest.

How this bill helps: The majority of funding is required to go to services and shelter for victims. Additionally, the bill's multidisciplinary focus will result in all stakeholders coming together to collaborate on fixing the response protocol, making it more efficient and addressing the intense needs of these children.

Challenge: Trafficking cases are time intensive and can be expensive. Federal prosecutors may prosecute these cases but local police are most often in a position to find the crime. Local law enforcement agencies need the resources and training so they can identify a trafficking case. If law enforcement does not have the resources to investigate trafficking cases, criminals will see little risk in the profitable venture of selling children for sex.

How this bill helps: By allowing funds to be used for training and law enforcement/prosecutor salaries related to investigation and prosecution of sex trafficking cases, the bill supports critical enforcement efforts.



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