

November 2016

The Honorable Mike Pence
Vice President-elect
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006

RE: Trump Administration Policy Agenda Recommendations to Address Sexual Exploitation

Dear Mr. Vice President-elect Pence:

We, the undersigned, wish to call your attention to the fact that America is suffering from a sexual exploitation crisis. Sex trafficking, pornography addiction, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and more, are issues significantly impacting American citizens, families, and communities. This necessitates that the full spectrum of sexual harm be addressed by our federal government. Through the presidential appointment process, presidential directives and policies, as well as a robust, presidential legislative agenda, we seek a holistic commitment to ending the pandemic of sexual exploitation in the United States.

Evidence supports the fact that child sexual abuse, prostitution, pornography, sex trafficking, sexual violence, etc., are not isolated phenomena occurring in a vacuum. Rather, these and other forms of sexual abuse and exploitation overlap and reinforce one another. For example, we know that child sexual abuse often predates an individual's entry into prostitution,¹ and that sexting makes adolescents vulnerable to revenge porn or sexual extortion.² We also know that pornography is often made of sex trafficked women and children,³ and increases the demand for buying sex.⁴ Further, females who consume pornography are at greater risk of being a victim of sexual harassment or sexual assault.⁵ The list of connections goes on and on.

Accordingly, we ask that the incoming Trump Administration prioritize the list of policy actions outlined below. Enactment of these recommendations will ensure the Trump

¹ Rochelle Dalla, Yan Xia, and Heather Kennedy, "‘You Just Give Them What They Want and Pray They Don't Kill You': Street-Level Sex Workers' Reports of Victimization, Personal Resources, and Coping Strategies." *Violence Against Women* 9, no. 11, (2003): 1367-1394; Melissa Farley, Ann Cotton, et al., "Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries: An Update on Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder," *Journal of Trauma Practice* 2, no. 3/4 (2003): 33-74.

² Nancy E. Willard, "Sexting and Youth: Achieving a Rational Response," *Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 4, (2010): 542-562.

³ Farley, *ibid*.

⁴ Rachel Durchslag and Samir Goswami, *Deconstructing the Demand for Prostitution: Preliminary Insights from Interviews with Chicago Men Who Purchase Sex*, (Chicago, IL: Chicago Alliance against Sexual Exploitation, 2008); Martin A. Monto and Nick McRee, "A Comparison of the Male Customers of Female Street Prostitutes With National Samples of Men," *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 49, no. 5 (2005): 505-529; Martin A. Monto, "Summary Report for National Institute of Justice Grant #97-IJ-CX-0033 'Focusing on the Clients of Street Prostitutes: A Creative Approach to Reducing Violence Against Women'" (October 30, 1999).

⁵ Silvia Bonino, Silvia Ciairano, Emanuela Rabagliette, and Elena Cattelino, "Use of Pornography and Self-Reported Engagement in Sexual Violence among Adolescents," *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 3, no. 3 (2006):265-288; Leslie Gordon Simons, Ronald L. Simmons, Man-Kit Lei, and Tara E. Sutton, "Exposure to Harsh Parenting and Pornography as Explanations for Males' Sexual Coercion and Females' Sexual Victimization." *Violence and Victims* 27, no. 3 (2012): 378-395.

Administration institutes a seamless policy agenda that powerfully combats sexual exploitation, protects human rights, and preserves human dignity.

Sex Trafficking

1. Preserve National Security Presidential Directive-22 (NSPD-22). NSPD-22 instructs federal agencies to strengthen their collective efforts to combat trafficking in persons, adopts an abolitionist approach to combating human trafficking by recognizing that activities such as prostitution, pimping, pandering, and maintaining of brothels contribute to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, and formalizes the U.S. government's opposition to prostitution and related activities as inherently harmful and dehumanizing.
2. Nominate an individual to the position of Ambassador-at-Large for Trafficking in Persons at the U. S. Department of State who is committed to combating all forms of human trafficking (sex and labor trafficking), who will address the role of demand for commercial sex in the sex trafficking phenomenon, and who will vigorously support National Security Presidential Directive-22.
3. Amend Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA) of 1996 to allow prosecution of those who facilitate illegal commercial sex acts via the Internet. The CDA was intended to protect the public from indecency. Yet, as some courts have ironically interpreted the law, the CDA is shielding sex trafficking and prostitution websites from criminal and civil liabilities in cases involving facilitation of sex trafficking via the Internet. As a result sex trafficking is flourishing on the Internet, and those profiting from the sexual exploitation of countless individuals have repeatedly escaped justice.
4. In furtherance of the Department of Defense's "2015 Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) Instruction 2200.1," institute a rule making strip clubs off-limits to *all* U.S. military personnel worldwide. Strip clubs provide the perfect learning environment for sexually toxic attitudes and behaviors. Leering, jeering, sexual touching, lap dancing, acts of prostitution, sexual assaults, and sexual trafficking are everyday occurrences in strip clubs around the world. Military personnel participating in the consumption of commercial sex at strip clubs fuel the demand for sex trafficking. Moreover, military members cannot exploit and objectify women in one environment without it having a deleterious effect on other aspects of their lives, including their military service.
5. Direct the Department of Justice to aggressively combat the demand for commercial sex. As the *2013 Trafficking in Persons Report* observed, "If there were no demand for commercial sex, sex trafficking would not exist in the form it does today. This reality underscores the need for continued strong efforts to enact policies and promote cultural norms that disallow paying for sex." Accordingly, DOJ must reallocate resources

so that demand reduction efforts such as those undertaken in King County, Washington, and by Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart are replicated across the country.

6. Direct the Departments of Justice, State, and Health and Human Services, as well as USAID to provide guidance to U.S. states and foreign governments advising against the decriminalization of prostitution and against the normalization of prostitution as “sex work.” Multilateral organizations such as the UN Women and UNAIDS, as well as organizations like Amnesty International and the Open Society Foundation, are pushing for the full decriminalization of prostitution in the U.S. and abroad. Full decriminalization of prostitution transforms pimps and sex traffickers into “business entrepreneurs,” and institutes a *de facto* right for men buy women, men, and children for sex. Such laws do not protect the human rights of persons in prostitution, but guarantee that their dehumanization and exploitation will continue.

Pornography Public Health Crisis

1. Direct the U. S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to undertake investigations into the public health harms of pornography (i.e. association with sexual violence, adverse impacts on other behaviors, link to erectile and sexual dysfunctions, transmission of STDs, detrimental impact on brain health, etc.) and to launch a comprehensive effort to abate these problems.
2. Appoint an Attorney General who will vigorously enforce current federal obscenity laws, 18 U.S.C. § 1460 to 18 U.S.C. § 1470. The Trump campaign has pledged to combat pornography. It can fulfill this pledge and curb the demand for prostitution, sex trafficking, child sex abuse, and sexual violence by appointing an Attorney General who will seek to enforce these existing federal laws which prohibit distribution of hardcore pornography on the Internet, on cable/satellite TV, on hotel/motel TV, in retail shops, and by common carrier.
3. Require that training programs informing military personnel about the harms of pornography be incorporated in anti-sexual assault trainings across *all* Department of Defense agencies.
4. Institute routine audit and removal of pornography found on military computers, storage drives, work areas, and officer’s clubs, across *all* branches of the U.S. military.

Indecency

1. Direct the Federal Communications Commission to vigorously enforce the federal indecency law, 18 U.S.C. § 1464, designed to protect children from damaging sexual content on television and appoint FCC commissioners committed to fulfilling this mission.

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2. Disband the current TV Parental Guidelines Oversight Monitoring Board (TVOMB). The TVOMB has enabled and sheltered a flawed content ratings system, rather than following its congressional and FCC mandate to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the system. The current TVOMB is a sham composed of broadcast television insiders, and is utterly lacking in congressional oversight and public transparency. Accordingly, review and revision the statutes under which the TVOMB is organized is essential to achieving consistency, transparency, accuracy, and accountability, as well as to protecting the well-being of America's children.

Respectfully yours,

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