



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A man was arrested last month in Western Nebraska for attempting to buy sex with someone he thought was 15 years old. Due to a recent change in law, he could be prosecuted for sex trafficking of a minor.

Is he really a “sex trafficker”? Federal human trafficking law says, “Yes.” And since August 24, 2017, Nebraska law too treats buyers as traffickers. The Unicameral also increased the penalty of this crime to a sentence of 20 years to life. All who consider buying sex should be on notice—the State of Nebraska is reinforcing its resolve to expose and prosecute commercial sex with minors and other sex trafficking victims. The buyers are now as vulnerable to arrest and prosecution as the sellers.

Here’s the reality—sex trafficking has historically been a profitable crime with low risk and high demand. Lately, however, these dynamics are changing in Nebraska.

For one, the risk of getting caught is increasing due to the focus of law enforcement across the state and the heightened vigilance of Nebraskans. If someone sees signs of human trafficking, they should call 888-373-7888 to report it. Regional teams of the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force now meet regularly to address human trafficking in their local communities and conduct operations to stop this crime. This new statewide approach complements the good work of the FBI-led Omaha Child Exploitation Task Force, which has addressed this crime in the Omaha area for years.

And it is working.

This past summer Douglas County District Court sentenced Anthony Swindle to a minimum of 180 years after a jury found him guilty of crimes, including selling a 15-year-old for sex.

The crime now carries more risk; yet it is still lucrative. There is considerable demand for minors, fueled by the Internet and the dark web, which brings a profit to those offering minors for sale.

The Unicameral acted and now soliciting (buying sex with) a minor is sex trafficking, a Class IB felony which carries a potential prison sentence of 20 years to life. This is designed to drive down demand. It makes buyers think twice before buying sex with those who might be minors or with those who might be offered for sex against their will. But it will only work as a deterrent if Nebraskans and visitors to our state know about this penalty.

The word is spreading. Arrests like the one last month are sending the message.

This week in the Capitol Rotunda, we are introducing another way to spread the message. We are launching the Demand An End ad campaign, warning buyers they are not as invisible as they think. Let's loudly proclaim to those living and entering our state from border to border—buying sex with a minor is not only immoral, but it also carries significant criminal penalties.

Ultimately, we want to dissuade buyers, drive down and then end the demand. Together, let's make sex trafficking less profitable as well as more risky for traffickers. During our watch—let's Demand an End.

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