

Safe Harbor for Trafficked Youth

(AB 41/SB 49)



13

The average age of a child sex-trafficking victim

THE PROBLEM

Children in Wisconsin are being trafficked for sex in our state. Although these kids are victims of numerous abuses, including sexual abuse, Wisconsin statutes remain out of date and allow for children to be charged with the crime of prostitution.

For no other crime do we charge individuals for an abuse committed against them. It's time for this to change.

These kids are victims, not criminals, and they should be treated as such. Without protection from prostitution charges, minors are afraid to speak out against their abusers.

30

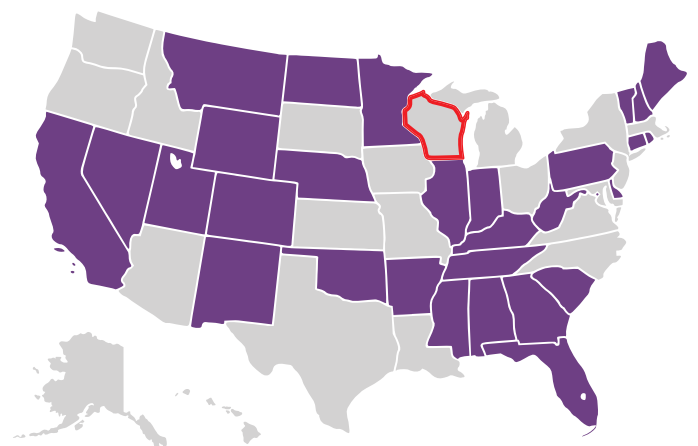
The number of states including D.C. that have already enacted similar legislation



THE SOLUTION

AB 41/SB 49 simply **provides immunity for children** under 18 from the crime of prostitution.

This bill would reconcile our state statutes, as **under Wisconsin law minors cannot legally consent to sex**, and to charge them with prostitution is contradictory.

Further, it **aligns with the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act**, which treats prostituted minors as victims of sexual exploitation instead of delinquents or criminals.



-  States with Safe Harbor Laws
-  States without Safe Harbor Laws

Source: Shared Hope International

72

Sex trafficking has been reported in all 72 counties in Wisconsin

A STATEWIDE ISSUE

Sex trafficking is occurring throughout the state. Over a recent 15 month period, there were 99 substantiated reports to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) of child sex trafficking. Half of these cases occurred in Milwaukee, while the other half occurred throughout the rest of the state.

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4x

Convictions of traffickers quadrupled after MN passed Safe Harbor Legislation

INCREASED CONVICTIONS OF TRAFFICKERS

“If we are going to be successful in building cases against traffickers, our real target, we need victims to be with us, to provide the information we need to unravel the trafficker’s network and to eventually testify in court. **If we expect victims to stand with us, they need to know they can trust us to help.**”

— Judge Brad Schimel, Former Attorney General

Often, sex-trafficked children do not report their traffickers because they fear they’ll be charged with a crime. **This bill eliminates a barrier between survivors and law enforcement**, allowing them to report their traffickers and seek support.

In Minnesota, after passing Safe Harbor legislation in 2011, convictions of traffickers quadrupled in 2012.

70+

70 - 90% of sex-trafficking victims have previously been sexually abused

TRAUMA INFORMED POLICY

Criminalizing youth who have been sexually exploited can add to the trauma they have already suffered. Treating trauma is a complex issue and avoiding re-traumatization is essential to any victim’s recovery.

“To tell a young person in the same breath that they have had a serious crime committed against them, and then charge them with a crime for what was done to them, is a burden no young person should have to endure. And **[current law] is in conflict with our commitment as a state to Fostering Futures and supporting trauma-informed systems, policies, and practices.**”

— Dr. Joy Ippolito, Former Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator, Department of Children and Families

“The survivors tell us that jail does not help. The traffickers know that arresting these young victims only reinforces their brainwashing that no one cares about them.”

— Jay Reinke, Human Trafficking Task Force of Greater Milwaukee

75

Cosponsors in the Wisconsin Legislature

JOIN US

It is time for Wisconsin to pass Safe Harbor legislation.

Join us—along with **55 Assembly cosponsors, 20 Senate cosponsors**, and advocates statewide—in supporting AB 41/SB 49 and pledge to work to pass the bill this session.



JILL BILLINGS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JIM STEINEKE
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

LaTonya Johnson
WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

Alberta Darling
Wisconsin State Senator