



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

October 28, 2019

Representative Renny Cushing, Chairman of House Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Legislative Office Building, Room 204
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Chairman Cushing and Members of the House Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee,

I am writing to you today to express my support of House Bill (HB) 201, relative to enhancing penalties for sex buyers exploiting trafficked children. It is my hope that the committee will strongly endorse the measure when you meet in Executive Session later this week.

House Bill 201 will increase the criminal penalty for anyone buying sex from a trafficked minor. As introduced, the bill is an important step toward attacking the demand side of sexual exploitation. It increases the penalty for anyone convicted of paying for sex with a minor or paying to watch a sexually explicit "performance" involving a minor. The current maximum prison term for such an offense is 7 years (a Class B felony). HB 201 would raise the maximum penalty to 15 years (a Class A felony). I believe it is imperative that we take this immediate action to further protect victims of sex trafficking.

At one time, New Hampshire was a leader against human trafficking, as we were one of the first states to criminalize this activity. As a result, service providers across the state have been able to assist survivors of sex and labor trafficking to rebuild their lives. We must continue that tradition now.

To be clear, any attempt to add any amendments to HB 201 that weaken New Hampshire's laws against prostitution, or any attempts to lay the groundwork to do so, will be met with a veto if they reach my desk.

I am thankful for the good work the subcommittee has done on this bill and I am hopeful that the full committee will join them in voting "Ought to Pass" on HB 201 as introduced. We owe it to children to keep them safe and to hold those who would do them harm accountable, and HB 201 does just that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris T. Sununu".

Christopher T. Sununu
Governor