

## 2019 ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### NORTH DAKOTA

#### FRAMEWORK ISSUE 1: CRIMINALIZATION OF DOMESTIC MINOR SEX TRAFFICKING

##### *Legal Components:*

- 1.1 *The state sex trafficking law addresses sex trafficking and clearly defines a human trafficking victim as any minor under the age of 18 used in a commercial sex act without regard to use of force, fraud, or coercion, aligning to the federal trafficking law.*
- 1.2 *Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is identified as a separate and distinct offense from general sexual offenses, which may also be used to prosecute those who commit commercial sex offenses against minors.*
- 1.3 *Prostitution statutes refer to the sex trafficking statute to acknowledge the intersection of prostitution with trafficking victimization.*
- 1.4 *The state racketeering or gang crimes statute includes sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) offenses as predicate acts allowing the statute to be used to prosecute child sex trafficking crimes.*

##### *Legal Analysis<sup>1</sup>:*

- 1.1 *The state sex trafficking law addresses sex trafficking and clearly defines a human trafficking victim as any minor under the age of 18 used in a commercial sex act without regard to use of force, fraud, or coercion, aligning to the federal trafficking law.*

North Dakota specifically criminalizes sex trafficking of minors under 18 and does not require proof of force, fraud, or coercion. The general human trafficking offense under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-02(1) (Trafficking an individual) states,

A person commits the offense of trafficking an individual if the person knowingly recruits, transports, transfers, harbors, receives, provides, obtains, isolates, maintains, or entices an individual in furtherance of:

....

- b. Sexual servitude in violation of section 12.1-41.04 [Sexual servitude]

“Trafficking an individual who is a minor is a class AA felony,” and carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.<sup>2</sup> N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-02(3), 12.1-32-01(1).

<sup>1</sup> This report includes legislation enacted as of August 1, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Additional penalties may apply to human trafficking offenses under certain circumstances. Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-08 (Aggravating circumstance),

N.D. Cent. Code §12.1-41-04(1) (Sexual servitude) specifically criminalizes sex trafficking of a minor without regard to force, fraud or coercion. It states in part,

A person commits the offense of sexual servitude if the person knowingly:

- a. Maintains or makes available a minor for the purpose of engaging the minor in commercial sexual activity.

....

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-01(3) (Definitions) defines “commercial sexual activity” as “sexual activity for which anything of value is given to, promised to, or received, by a person.” Sexual servitude is punishable as a Class AA by up to life imprisonment when the victim is a minor. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-04(3), 12.1-32-01(1).

Also included in Chapter 12.1-41 (Uniform Act on Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking) are offenses related to patronizing victims of sex trafficking:

Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-05(1) (Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude), “A person commits the offense of patronizing a victim of sexual servitude if the person knowingly gives, agrees to give, or offers to give anything of value so that an individual may engage in commercial sexual activity with another individual and the person knows that the other individual is a victim of sexual servitude.” Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude is punishable as a Class A felony by imprisonment up to 20 years, a fine up to \$20,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-05(2), 12.1-32-01(2).

Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-06 (Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity),

1. A person commits the offense of patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity if:
  - a. With the intent that an individual engage in commercial sexual activity with a minor, the person gives, agrees to give, or offers to give anything of value to a minor or another person so that the individual may engage in commercial sexual activity with a minor; or
  - b. The person gives, agrees to give, or offers to give anything of value to a minor or another person so that an individual may engage in commercial sexual activity with a minor.
2. Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity under subdivision a of subsection 1 is a class A felony.
3. Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity under subdivision b of subsection 1 is a class B felony.

A Class A felony is punishable by imprisonment up to 20 years, a fine up to \$20,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-05(2), 12.1-32-01(2). A Class B felony is punishable by imprisonment up to 10 years, a fine up to \$20,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-05(2), 12.1-32-01(3).

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1. An aggravating circumstance during the commission of an offense under section 12.1-41-02, 12.1-41-03, or 12.1-41-04 occurs when the defendant recruited, enticed, or obtained the victim of the offense from a shelter that serves individuals subjected to human trafficking, domestic violence, or sexual assault, runaway youth, foster children, or the homeless.
  2. If the trier of fact finds that an aggravating circumstance occurred during the commission of an offense under section 12.1-41-02, 12.1-41-03, or 12.1-41-04, the defendant may be imprisoned for up to five years in addition to the period of imprisonment prescribed for the offense.

In addition, N.D. Cent. Code. § 12.1-41-21(4) (Forced or coerced abortion) provides, “If the trier of fact finds that a forced or coerced abortion occurred during the commission of an offense under section 12.1-41-02 [Trafficking an individual], 12.1-41-03 [Involuntary servitude], or 12.1-41-04 [Sexual servitude], the court may sentence the defendant to be imprisoned for up to five years in addition to the period of imprisonment prescribed for the offense.”

1.2 *Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is identified as a separate and distinct offense from general sexual offenses, which may also be used to prosecute those who commit commercial sex offenses against minors.*

The following laws criminalize CSEC in North Dakota:

1. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-02(1) (Facilitating prostitution) makes it a crime to, among other things, “Knowingly solicit[] a person to patronize a prostitute” or to “[k]nowingly procure[] a prostitute for a patron.” Under subsection (2),

The offense is a class A felony if the actor intentionally causes another to remain a prostitute by force, coercion, threat, or deception, or the prostitute is the actor’s spouse or ward,<sup>3</sup> or a person for whose care, protection, or support the actor is responsible. Otherwise it is a class C felony.

A Class A felony is punishable by imprisonment up to twenty years, a fine of \$20,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(2). A Class C felony carries a penalty of imprisonment up to five years, a \$10,000 fine, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(4).

2. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-02(1) (Use of a minor in a sexual performance) establishes a Class A felony when an individual “knowing the character and content of a performance<sup>4</sup> . . . employs . . . a minor to engage in sexual conduct during a performance or, if being a parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a minor, that person consents to the participation by the minor in sexual conduct during a performance.” Additionally, pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-02(2), “An adult is guilty of a class A felony if, with the intent to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce a minor to engage in a sexual performance, the adult portrays the adult to be a minor.”

A Class A felony is punishable by imprisonment up to 20 years, a \$20,000 fine, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(2). However, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-04.2 (Sexual performance by a minor—Enhanced penalties) provides for enhanced penalties, stating in subsection (2),

Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 12.1-32-01 and 12.1-32-01.1 relating to fines, the court shall impose the following fine upon the conviction of a person or entity described in subsection 1 for a second or subsequent offense under this chapter:

- a. For an individual, a fine not to exceed fifty thousand dollars; or
- b. For a corporation, limited liability company, association, partnership, or other legal entity, a fine not to exceed one hundred thousand dollars.

Non-commercial sex offenses that may apply in certain CSEC cases include the following:

1. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-03 (Gross sexual imposition) makes it a crime, among other things, when a person “engages in a sexual act with another, or . . . causes another to engage in a sexual act” or “engages in sexual contact with another, or . . . causes another to engage in sexual contact” when the victim is less than 15, or when “[t]hat person compels the victim to submit by force or by threat of imminent death, serious bodily injury, or kidnapping, to be inflicted on any human being.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-03(1), (2).

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<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 30.1-26-01(6), “A ‘ward’ is a person for whom a guardian or limited guardian has been appointed. A ‘minor ward’ is a minor for whom a guardian has been appointed solely because of minority.” A person can be charged with “sexual abuse of wards” if that person “engages in a sexual act with another person, or . . . causes another to engage in a sexual act . . . if the other person is in official custody or detained in a hospital, prison, or other institution and the actor has supervisory or disciplinary authority over the other person.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-06.

<sup>4</sup> Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-01(5) (Definitions), “‘Sexual performance’ means any performance which includes sexual conduct by a minor.”

This crime is a Class AA felony if “serious bodily injury” was inflicted on the victim, the victim was under 15 and the offender over 22, or the victim subjected to the sexual act was compelled “to submit by force or by threat of imminent death, serious bodily injury, or kidnapping, to be inflicted on any human being.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-03(3)(a). The sentence for committing these Class AA felonies is imprisonment for not less than 20 years with probation to follow.<sup>5</sup> N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-03(3)(a). In all other cases, this is a Class A felony with possible imprisonment up to 20 years, a fine not to exceed \$20,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-20-03(3)(b), 12.1-32-01(2).

2. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-04 (Sexual imposition) makes it a Class B felony to

“engage[] in a sexual act or sexual contact with another, or . . . cause[] another to engage in a sexual act or sexual contact . . . if the actor:

1. Compels the other person to submit by any threat or coercion that would render a person reasonably incapable of resisting; or
2. Engages in a sexual act or sexual contact with another, whether consensual or not, as part of an induction, initiation, ceremony, pledge, hazing, or qualification to become a member or an associate of any criminal street gang as defined in section 12.1-06.2-01.”

A Class B felony is punishable by imprisonment up to 10 years, a \$20,000 fine, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(3).

3. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-03.1(1) (Continuous sexual abuse of a child) makes it a crime for an adult to “engage[] in any combination of three or more sexual acts or sexual contacts with a minor under the age of fifteen years during a period of three or more months.” If the offender was at least 22 years of age at the time of the offense, the offense is a Class AA felony. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-03.1(1). For all other violations of this statute, the offense is a Class A felony. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-03.1(1).
4. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-07(1) (Sexual assault) makes it a Class C felony to

knowingly ha[ve] sexual contact with another person, or . . . cause[] another person to have sexual contact with that person . . . if:

- .....
- e. The other person is a minor, fifteen years of age or older, and the actor is the other person’s parent, guardian, or is otherwise responsible for general supervision of the other person’s welfare; or
  - f. The other person is a minor, fifteen years of age or older, and the actor is an adult [at least 22 years old].

If the offender of subsection (1)(f) is 18–21 years old, then the offense is a Class A misdemeanor. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-07(2).

5. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-05(1) (Corruption or solicitation of minors) makes it a Class A misdemeanor for an adult to “engage[] in, solicit[] with the intent to engage in, or cause[] another to engage in a sexual act with a minor” when the minor is 15 or older. Subsection (2) states,

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<sup>5</sup> However, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-03(3)(a) (Gross sexual imposition—Penalty) states in part,

The court may deviate from the mandatory sentence if the court finds that the sentence would impose a manifest injustice and the defendant has accepted responsibility for the crime or cooperated with law enforcement. However, a defendant convicted of a class AA felony under this section may not be sentenced to serve less than five years of incarceration.

An adult who solicits with the intent to engage in a sexual act with a minor under age fifteen or engages in or causes another to engage in a sexual act<sup>6</sup> when the adult is at least twenty-two years of age and the victim is a minor fifteen years of age or older, is guilty of a class C felony.

A Class A misdemeanor carries a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 360 days, a fine of \$3,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(5). A Class C felony is punishable by imprisonment up to five years, a fine of \$10,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(4).

6. N.D. Cent. Code § 14-10-06 (Unlawful to encourage or contribute to the deprivation or delinquency of minor) states in subsection (2),

Any individual who by any act willfully encourages, causes, or contributes to the deprivation of a child less than sixteen years of age by causing that child to engage in sexual conduct as defined under section 12.1-27.2-01, in any play, motion picture, photograph, dance, or other visual representation is guilty of a class C felony.

- 1.3 *Prostitution statutes refer to the sex trafficking statute to acknowledge the intersection of prostitution with trafficking victimization.*

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-03 (Prostitution) distinguishes between minors and adults by making the prostitution law solely applicable to adults, but it does not refer to the sex trafficking law to acknowledge the intersection of prostitution with trafficking victimization. However, related provisions promote identification of commercially sexually exploited minors as victims of trafficking. Specifically, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-12(1) (Immunity of minor) provides that minors are not criminally liable for prostitution offenses and § 12.1-41-13 (Affirmative defense of victim) allows human trafficking victims to assert an affirmative defense to prostitution charges and other charges related to their victimization.

- 1.4 *The state racketeering or gang crimes statute includes sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) offenses as predicate acts allowing the statute to be used to prosecute child sex trafficking crimes.*

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-06.1-03 (Illegal control of an enterprise – Illegally conducting an enterprise) states,

1. A person is guilty of an offense if such person, through a pattern of racketeering activity or its proceeds, acquires or maintains, by investment or otherwise, control of any enterprise.
2. A person is guilty of an offense if the person is employed or associated with any enterprise and conducts or participates in the conduct of that enterprise's affairs through a pattern of racketeering activity.

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<sup>6</sup> N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-02(4) (Definitions—Sex Offenses) defines “sexual act” as

sexual contact between human beings consisting of contact between the penis and the vulva, the penis and the anus, the mouth and the penis, the mouth and the vulva, or any other portion of the human body and the penis, anus, or vulva; or the use of an object which comes in contact with the victim’s anus, vulva, or penis. For the purposes of this subsection, sexual contact between the penis and the vulva, the penis and the anus, any other portion of the human body and the anus or vulva, or an object and the anus, vulva, or penis of the victim, occurs upon penetration, however slight. Emission is not required.

Subsection (5) defines “sexual contact” as

any touching, whether or not through the clothing or other covering, of the sexual or other intimate parts of the person, or the penile ejaculation or ejaculate or emission of urine or feces upon any part of the person, for the purpose of arousing or satisfying sexual or aggressive desires.

3. A knowing violation of this section is a class B felony.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-06.1-01(2)(f) (Definitions—Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) defines “racketeering” in part as

any act including any criminal attempt, facilitation, solicitation, or conspiracy, committed for financial gain, which is chargeable or indictable under the laws of the state in which the act occurred and, if the act occurred in a state other than this state, would be chargeable or indictable under the laws of this state had the act occurred in this state and punishable by imprisonment for more than one year, regardless of whether such act is charged or indicted, involving:

. . . .

- (17) Obscenity.
- (18) Child pornography.
- (19) Prostitution.
- (20) Human trafficking.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-06.1-02(1) (Leading a criminal association) states,

A person is guilty of an offense by any of the following:

- a. Intentionally organizing, managing, directing, supervising, or financing a criminal association.
- b. Knowingly inciting or inducing others to engage in violence or intimidation to promote or further the criminal objectives of a criminal association.
- c. Willfully furnishing advice, assistance, or direction in the conduct, financing, or management of a criminal association’s affairs with the intent to promote or further the criminal objectives of a criminal association.
- d. Intentionally promoting or furthering the criminal objectives of a criminal association by inducing or committing any act or omission by a public servant in violation of official duty.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-06.1-01(1)(b) defines “criminal association” as

any combination of persons or enterprises engaging, or having the purpose of engaging, on a continuing basis in conduct which violates any one or more provisions of any felony statute of this state or which is the willful and illegal transportation or disposal of radioactive waste material or hazardous waste.

A violation of this section is a Class B felony, subject to a maximum penalty of ten years imprisonment, a fine of \$20,000 or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(3). Additionally, an offender may be subject to asset forfeiture and civil remedies. Additionally, under these sections, a trafficker is subject to civil asset forfeiture. Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-06.1-05(f) (Racketeering – Civil remedies), following a determination of liability, the court may order:

Forfeiture, pursuant to chapter 32-14, to the state school fund of the state or county as appropriate under section 29-27-02.1, to the extent not already ordered to be paid in other damages:

- (1) Any property or other interest acquired or maintained by a person in violation of section 12.1-06.1-02 (Leading a criminal association) or 12.1-06.1-03 (Illegal control of an enterprise).
- (2) Any interest in, security of, claims against, or property or contractual right of any kind affording a source of influence over any enterprise that a person has established, operated, controlled, conducted, or participated in the conduct of in violation of section 12.1-06.1-02 or 12.1-06.1-03.
- (3) All proceeds traceable to an offense included in the definition of racketeering and all moneys, negotiable instruments, securities, and other things of value used or intended to be used to facilitate commission of the offense if upon application for the order it is shown to the satisfaction of the court that the racketeering offense has occurred as a part of a pattern of racketeering activity.

Furthermore, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-06.1-05(1) (Racketeering—Civil remedies) provides,

[a] person who sustains injury to person, business, or property by a pattern of racketeering activity or by a violation of section 12.1-06.1-02 [Leading a criminal association] or 12.1-06.1-03 [Illegal control of an enterprise] may file an action in district court for the recovery of treble damages and the costs of the suit, including reasonable attorney fees. The state may file an action in behalf of those persons injured or to prevent, restrain, or remedy a pattern of racketeering activity or a violation of section 12.1-06.1-02 or 12.1-06.1-03.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-06.1-05(4) states,

Following a determination of liability, orders may include:

....

- d. Ordering the payment of treble damages and appropriate restitution to those persons injured by a pattern of racketeering activity or a violation of section 12.1-06.1-02 or 12.1-06.1-03.
- e. Ordering the payment of all costs and expenses and reasonable attorneys' fees concerned with the prosecution and investigation of any offense included in the definition of racketeering if upon application for the order it is shown to the satisfaction of the court that the racketeering offense has occurred as a part of a pattern of racketeering activity or a violation of section 12.1-06.1-02 or 12.1-06.1-03, civil and criminal, incurred by the state or county as appropriate to be paid to the general fund of the state or county that brings the action.

***Legal Components:***

- 2.1 *The state sex trafficking law can be applied to buyers of commercial sex acts with a minor.*
  - 2.2 *Buyers of commercial sex acts with a minor can be prosecuted under commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) laws.*
  - 2.3 *Solicitation laws differentiate between soliciting sex with an adult and soliciting sex with a minor under 18.*
  - 2.4 *Penalties for buyers of commercial sex acts with minors are as high as federal penalties.*
  - 2.5 *Using the Internet or electronic communications to lure, entice, or purchase, or attempt to lure, entice or purchase, commercial sex acts with a minor is a separate crime or results in an enhanced penalty for buyers.*
  - 2.6 *No age mistake defense is permitted for a buyer of commercial sex acts with any minor under 18.*
  - 2.7 *Base penalties for buying sex acts with a minor under 18 are sufficiently high and not reduced for older minors.*
  - 2.8 *Financial penalties for buyers of commercial sex acts with minors are sufficiently high to make it difficult for buyers to hide the crime.*
  - 2.9 *Buying and possessing child sexual abuse material (CSAM) carries penalties as high as similar federal offenses.*
  - 2.10 *Convicted buyers of commercial sex acts with minors are required to register as sex offenders.*
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***Legal Analysis:***

- 2.1 *The state sex trafficking law can be applied to buyers of commercial sex acts with a minor.*

While the core human trafficking law, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-02 (Trafficking an individual), and the sex trafficking law, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-04 (Sexual servitude), do not apply to buyers, two offenses within the human trafficking chapter are applicable to buyers.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-02, the core human trafficking law, criminalizes sex trafficking by referring to the sexual servitude offense under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-04 and the sexual servitude offense only applies to defendants who “maintain[] or make[] available a minor for the purpose of engaging the minor in commercial sexual activity,” these offenses are limited in applicability to traffickers and do not criminalize the conduct of buyers of sex with minors. However, the patronizing offenses under N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-05 (Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude) and 12.1-41-06 (Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity) can be applied to buyers of commercial sex acts with minors.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-05 (Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude) makes it a Class A felony if a person knowingly gives, agrees to give, or offers to give anything of value so that an individual may engage in commercial sexual activity with a minor and the person knows that the other individual, the minor, is a victim of sexual servitude. A Class A felony is punishable by imprisonment up to 20 years, a fine up to \$20,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(2).

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-06(1) (Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity) states,

- A person commits the offense of patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity if:
- a. With the intent that an individual engage in commercial sexual activity with a minor, the person gives, agrees to give, or offers to give anything of value to a minor or another person so that the individual may engage in commercial sexual activity with a minor or;
  - b. The person gives, agrees to give, or offers to give anything of value to a minor or another person so that an individual may engage in commercial sexual activity with a minor.



Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity under subdivision (a) is a Class A felony which is punishable by imprisonment up to 20 years, a fine up to \$20,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-06(2), 12.1-32-01(2). Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity under subdivision (b) is a Class B felony which is punishable by imprisonment up to 10 years, a fine of \$20,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-06(3), 12.1-32-01(3).

2.1.1 Recommendation: Amend the core sex trafficking offense, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-04 (Sexual servitude) to include the conduct of buyers as a violation of N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-04 (Sexual servitude) and clarify that buyers of sex with minors are sex trafficking offenders.

2.2 *Buyers of commercial sex acts with a minor can be prosecuted under commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) laws.*

North Dakota's CSEC laws, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-02 (Facilitating prostitution) and N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-02 (Use of a minor in a sexual performance), do not make it a crime to purchase sex acts with a minor. While some sex offense laws may apply to buyers, they do not specifically criminalize purchasing commercial sex acts with a minor.<sup>7</sup>

2.2.1 Recommendation: Establish a penalty under North Dakota's CSEC laws that specifically criminalizes the purchase of commercial sex acts with any minor under 18.

2.3 *Solicitation laws differentiate between soliciting sex with an adult and soliciting sex with a minor under 18.*

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-06<sup>8</sup> (Hiring an individual to engage in sexual activity) differentiates between soliciting sex with an adult and soliciting sex with a minor by referring to one of the buyer-applicable trafficking laws for punishment of cases involving a minor victim. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-06 states, "Except as provided in section 12.1-41-06 [Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity], an individual who hires or offers or agrees to hire another individual with the intention of engaging in sexual activity is guilty of a class B misdemeanor for a first offense." N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-06(1).<sup>9</sup>

2.4 *Penalties for buyers of commercial sex acts with minors are as high as federal penalties.*

A violation of N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-05 (Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude) is punishable as a Class A felony by imprisonment up to 20 years, a fine up to \$20,000, or both when the person patronizes a minor and knows that the minor is a victim of sexual servitude. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-05(3), 12.1-32-01(2). A violation of N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-06(1)(a) (Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity) as a Class A felony by imprisonment up to 20 years, a fine up to \$20,000, or both when the defendant acts with the intent to engage in commercial sexual activity with a minor. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-06(2), 12.1-32-01(2). If it is not established that the defendant acted with intent to engage in commercial sex with a minor, a violation of N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-06(1)(b) is punishable as a Class B felony by imprisonment up to 10 years, a fine of \$20,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-06(3), 12.1-32-01(3).

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<sup>7</sup> See *supra* Component 1.2, discussing laws that may apply to juvenile sex trafficking but do not specifically criminalize commercial sexual conduct involving minors.

<sup>8</sup> The text of N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-06 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of House Bill 1465 during the 2019 Regular Session of the 66th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota (effective August 1, 2019).

<sup>9</sup> Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-07 (Offender education program), "A sentence for an offense under section 12.1-29-06 may include an order for the offender to participate in an offender education program on the negative consequences of the commercial sex industry, including health and legal consequences and the impact on communities, survivors, spouses, and children. The court may order the offender to pay the cost of the offender education program."

In comparison, if the victim is under the age of 14, a conviction under the TVPA for child sex trafficking is punishable by 15 years to life imprisonment and a fine not to exceed \$250,000. 18 U.S.C. §§ 1591(b)(1), 3559(a)(1), 3571(b)(3). If the victim is between the ages of 14–17 a conviction is punishable by 10 years to life imprisonment and a fine not to exceed \$250,000. 18 U.S.C. §§ 1591(b)(2), 3559(a)(1), 3571(b)(3). A conviction is punishable by mandatory life imprisonment however, if the buyer has a prior conviction for a federal sex offense<sup>10</sup> against a minor. 18 U.S.C. § 3559(e)(1). To the extent buyers can be prosecuted under other federal CSEC laws,<sup>11</sup> a conviction is punishable by penalties ranging from a fine not to exceed \$250,000 to life imprisonment and a fine not to exceed \$250,000.<sup>12</sup>

2.5 *Using the Internet or electronic communications to lure, entice, or purchase, or attempt to lure, entice or purchase, commercial sex acts with a minor is a separate crime or results in an enhanced penalty for buyers.*

Using the Internet to induce or engage a minor for sex is prohibited under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-05.1 (Luring minors by computer or other electronic means). Although the offense does not specifically refer to a commercial sexual arrangement, it may apply to CSEC situations. Subsection (1) states,

An adult is guilty of luring minors by computer or other electronic means when:

- a. The adult knows the character and content of a communication that, in whole or in part, implicitly or explicitly discusses or depicts actual or simulated nudity, sexual acts, sexual contact, sadomasochistic abuse, or other sexual performances and uses any computer communication system or other electronic means that allows the input, output, examination, or transfer of data or programs from one computer or electronic device to another to initiate or engage in such communication with a person the adult believes to be a minor; and
- b. By means of that communication the adult importunes, invites, or induces a person the adult believes to be a minor to engage in sexual acts or to have sexual contact with the adult, or to engage in a sexual performance, obscene sexual performance, or sexual conduct for the adult's benefit, satisfaction, lust, passions, or sexual desires.

This offense has varying degrees of penalties depending on the age of the offender and the victim. It is a Class A misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 360 days, a fine of \$3,000, or both if the offender is less than 22 and “reasonably believes the minor” is 15-17. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-20-05.1(2), 12.1-32-01(5). It is a Class C felony with a maximum penalty of imprisonment for five years, a fine of \$10,000 if the adult is less than 22 and “reasonably believes the minor is under” 15, or if the adult is 22 or older and “reasonably believes the minor is” 15-17, or both. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-20-05.1(2), 12.1-32-01(4). Finally, it is a Class B felony with a maximum penalty of imprisonment for ten years, a fine of \$20,000 if the adult is 22 or older and “reasonably believes the minor is under” 15, or both. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-20-05.1(2), 12.1-

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<sup>10</sup> Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3559(e)(2), “federal sex offense” is defined as an offense under section 1591 [18 USCS § 1591] (relating to sex trafficking of children), 2241 [18 USCS § 2241] (relating to aggravated sexual abuse), 2242 [18 USCS § 2242] (relating to sexual abuse), 2244(a)(1) [18 USCS § 2244(a)(1)] (relating to abusive sexual contact), 2245 [18 USCS § 2245] (relating to sexual abuse resulting in death), 2251 [18 USCS § 2251] (relating to sexual exploitation of children), 2251A [18 USCS § 2251A] (relating to selling or buying of children), 2422(b) [18 USCS § 2422(b)] (relating to coercion and enticement of a minor into prostitution), or 2423(a) [18 USCS § 2423(a)] (relating to transportation of minors).

<sup>11</sup> 18 U.S.C. §§ 2251A(b) (Selling or buying of children), 2251(a) (Sexual exploitation of children), 2423(a) (Transportation of a minor with intent for minor to engage in criminal sexual activity), 2422(a) (Coercion and enticement), 2252(a)(2), (a)(4) (Certain activities relating to material involving the sexual exploitation of minors).

<sup>12</sup> 18 U.S.C. §§ 2251A(b) (conviction punishable by imprisonment for 30 years to life and a fine), 2251(e) (conviction punishable by imprisonment for 15–30 years and a fine), 2423(a) (conviction punishable by imprisonment for 10 years to life and a fine), 2422(a) (conviction punishable by a fine, imprisonment up to 20 years, or both), 2252(b) (stating that a conviction under subsection (a)(2) is punishable by imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine, while a conviction under subsection (a)(4) is punishable by imprisonment up to 10 years, a fine, or both); *see also* 18 U.S.C §§ 3559(a)(1) (classifying all of the above listed offenses as felonies), 3571(b)(3) (providing a fine up to \$250,000 for any felony conviction).

32-01(3). “The court shall sentence an adult convicted of a class B or class C felony under this section to serve a term of imprisonment of at least one year, except the court may sentence an individual to less than one year if the individual did not take a substantial step toward meeting with the minor.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-05.1(2).

2.6 *No age mistake defense is permitted for a buyer of commercial sex acts with any minor under 18.*

While a mistake of age defense is specifically prohibited under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-04(2) (Sexual servitude), this offense does not apply to the conduct of buyers, and the offenses that do apply to the conduct of buyers, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-06 (Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity) and § 12.1-41-05 (Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude), do not specifically prohibit a mistake of age defense. Instead, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-06 (Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity) provides a heightened penalty when the defendant acted with the intent to engage in commercial sexual activity with a minor. Buyers may also assert an age mistake defense to charges under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-05 (Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude), which requires that the defendant knew that the person patronized was a victim of sexual servitude.<sup>13</sup>

- 2.6.1 Recommendation: Amend N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-06 (Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity) and § 12.1-41-05 (Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude) to specifically prohibit a mistake of age defense.

2.7 *Base penalties for buying sex acts with a minor under 18 are sufficiently high and not reduced for older minors.*

North Dakota’s buyer-applicable trafficking laws do not stagger penalties based on a minor’s age and provide sufficiently high penalties. A conviction under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-06(1)(a) (Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity) is a Class A felony punishable by imprisonment for up to 20 years, while a conviction under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-06(1)(b) is a Class B felony punishable by imprisonment for up to 10 years. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-06(2), (3), 12.1-32-01(2), (3). A conviction under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-05 (Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude) involving a minor is a Class A felony punishable by imprisonment for up to 20 years. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-06(2), 12.1-32-01(2).

2.8 *Financial penalties for buyers of commercial sex acts with minors are sufficiently high to make it difficult for buyers to hide the crime.*

Buyers convicted of an offense involving a minor victim under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-05 (Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude) or N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-06 (Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity) face a fine of up to \$20,000. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-05(3), 12.1-41-06(2), (3), 12.1-32-01(2), (3).

A buyer could face discretionary civil asset forfeiture for certain property. N.D. Cent. Code § 29-31.1-04(1) (Forfeiture proceedings) states, “Forfeiture is a civil proceeding not dependent upon a prosecution for, or conviction of, a criminal offense and forfeiture proceedings are separate and distinct from any related criminal action.”<sup>14</sup> Under N.D. Cent. Code § 29-31.1-01(1) (Definitions—Property Forfeiture and Disposition) “forfeitable property” is defined as including,

- a. Property that is illegally possessed or is contraband.

<sup>13</sup> Additionally, buyers may also assert a defense to charges under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-05 (Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude) based on lack of knowledge that the minor victim was a victim of sexual servitude, i.e., that the victim was maintained or made available for commercial sex acts by a third party.

<sup>14</sup> Under N.D. Cent. Code § 29-31.1-10 (Inapplicability of chapter), “The provisions of this chapter do not apply to forfeiture proceedings commenced under other specific provisions of law, including chapters 12.1-06.1 [Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations], 19-03.1 [Uniform Controlled Substances Act], and 20.1-10 [Confiscation under Title 20 (Game, Fish, Predators, and Boating)].”

- b. Property that has been used or is intended to be used to facilitate the commission of a criminal offense or to avoid detection or apprehension of a person committing a criminal offense . . . .
- c. Property that is acquired as or from the proceeds of a criminal offense.
- d. Property offered or given to another as an inducement for the commission of a criminal offense.
- e. A vehicle or other means of transportation used in the commission of a felony, the escape from the scene of the commission of a felony, or in the transportation of property that is the subject matter of a felony.
- . . . .

N.D. Cent. Code § 29-31.1-03 (Seizure of forfeitable property) states in part, “Forfeitable property may be seized whenever and wherever the property is found within this state. Forfeitable property may be seized by taking custody of the property or by serving upon the person in possession of the property a notice of forfeiture and seizure.” N.D. Cent. Code §29-31.1-03 also governs disposition of the property and requires that

[i]f the court finds that the forfeiture is warranted, an order transferring ownership to the seizing agency must be entered and the property must be delivered to the seizing agency for disposition as directed by the court. Property that has been seized for forfeiture, and is not already secured as evidence in a criminal case, must be safely secured or stored by the agency that caused its seizure.

A buyer of commercial sex with a minor may also be required to pay restitution under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08 (Hearing prior to ordering restitution, reparation, or reimbursement of indigent defense costs and expenses—Conditions—Collection of restitution for insufficient funds checks—Continuing appropriation), which provides for restitution at the discretion of the court, unless the victim has suffered pecuniary damages. Where the victim suffers pecuniary damages, restitution is mandatory. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08(1)<sup>15</sup> states in part,

Before imposing restitution or reparation as a sentence or condition of probation, the court shall hold a hearing on the matter with notice to the prosecuting attorney and to the defendant as to the nature and amount of restitution. The court, when sentencing a person adjudged guilty of criminal activities that have resulted in pecuniary damages, in addition to any other sentence the court may impose, shall order that the defendant make restitution to the victim or other recipient as determined by the court . . . .

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08(1) further sets forth items the court is to consider “[i]n determining whether to order restitution . . . .” One of those items, subsection (1)(a), states that “[t]he defendant may be required as part of the sentence imposed by the court to pay the prescribed treatment costs for a victim of a sexual offense as defined in chapters 12.1-20 [Sex offenses] and 12.1-27.2 [Sexual performances by children].”

While N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-09 (Restitution) establishes mandatory restitution for defendants convicted under N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-02 (Trafficking an individual), 12.1-41-03 (Forced labor) and 12.1-41-04 (Sexual servitude), mandatory restitution does not apply to the buyer-applicable offenses under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-05 (Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude) and 12.1-41-06 (Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity).

## 2.9 *Buying and possessing child sexual abuse material (CSAM) carries penalties as high as similar federal offenses.*

Possessing child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is a Class C felony under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-04.1 (Possession of certain materials prohibited), which states, “A person is guilty of a class C felony if, knowing of its character and content, that person knowingly possesses any motion picture, photograph, or other visual

<sup>15</sup> The text of N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of House Bill 1252 during the 2019 Regular Session of the 66th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota (effective April 9, 2019).

representation that includes sexual conduct by a minor.” A Class C felony is punishable by imprisonment up to 5 years, a fine of \$10,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(4).

In comparison, a federal conviction for possession of CSAM<sup>16</sup> is generally punishable by imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine not to exceed \$250,000.<sup>17</sup> Subsequent convictions, however, are punishable by imprisonment up to 40 years and a fine not to exceed \$250,000.<sup>18</sup>

2.9.1 Recommendation: Amend N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-04.1 (Possession of certain materials prohibited) to raise the penalty to reflect the seriousness of the offense.

## 2.10 Convicted buyers of commercial sex acts with minors are required to register as sex offenders.

Convicted buyers of sex with minors may be required to register as sex offenders. In North Dakota, offenders could be required to register both for offenses against children and sexual offenses under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-15(2) (Offenders against children and sexual offenders—Sexually violent predators—Registration requirement—Penalty). Under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-15(1)(g),<sup>19</sup> “sexual offender” is defined as

a person who has pled guilty to or been found guilty, including juvenile delinquent adjudications, of a violation of section 12.1-20-03 [Gross sexual imposition], 12.1-20-03.1 [Continuous sexual abuse of a child], 12.1-20-04 [Sexual imposition], 12.1-20-05 [Corruption or solicitation of minors], 12.1-20-05.1 [Luring minors by computer or other electronic means], 12.1-20-06 [Sexual abuse of wards], 12.1-20-06.1 [Sexual exploitation by therapist], 12.1-20-07 [Sexual assault] except for subdivision a, . . . chapter 12.1-27.2 [Sexual performances by children (including child pornography related offenses)], or subsection 2 of section 12.1-22-03.1 [Surreptitious intrusion], subdivision b of subsection 1 of section 12.1-41.02 [Trafficking an individual], section 12.1-41-04 [Sexual servitude], 12.1-41-05 [Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude], or 12.1-41-06 [Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity], . . . or an equivalent offense from another court in the United States, a tribal court, or court of another country, or an attempt or conspiracy to commit these offenses.

However, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-15(2)(b) states in part,

The court shall require an individual to register by stating this requirement on the court records, if that individual:

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<sup>16</sup> 18 U.S.C. §§ 2252(a)(2), (a)(4) (Certain activities relating to material involving the sexual exploitation of minors), 2252A(a)(2)–(3) (Certain activities relating to material constituting or containing child pornography), 1466A(a), (b) (Obscene visual representations of the sexual abuse of children).

<sup>17</sup> 18 U.S.C. §§ 2252(b) (stating that a conviction under subsection (a)(2) is punishable by imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine, while a conviction under subsection (a)(4) is punishable by imprisonment up to 10 years, a fine, or both), 2252A(b)(1) (a conviction is punishable by imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine), 1466A(a), (b) (stating that a conviction under subsection (a) is “subject to the penalties provided in section 2252A(b)(1),” imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine, while a conviction under subsection (b) is “subject to the penalties provided in section 2252A(b)(2),” imprisonment up to 10 years, a fine, or both); *see also* 18 U.S.C. §§ 3559(a)(1) (classifying all of the above listed offenses as felonies), 3571(b)(3) (providing a fine up to \$250,000 for any felony conviction).

<sup>18</sup> 18 U.S.C. §§ 2252(b) (stating if a person has a prior conviction under subsection (a)(2), or a list of other statutes, a conviction is punishable by a fine and imprisonment for 15–40 years, but if a person has a prior conviction under subsection (a)(4), or a list of other statutes, a conviction is punishable by a fine and imprisonment for 10–20 years), 2252A(b)(1) (stating if a person has a prior conviction under subsection (a)(2), (a)(3), or a list of other statutes, a conviction is punishable by a fine and imprisonment for 15–40 years), 1466A(a), (b) (stating that the penalty scheme for section 2252A(b) applies); *see also* 18 U.S.C. §§ 3559(a)(1) (classifying all of the above listed offenses as felonies), 3571(b)(3) (providing a fine up to \$250,000 for any felony conviction).

<sup>19</sup> The text of N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-15 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of Senate Bill 2273 during the 2019 Regular Session of the 66th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota (effective August 1, 2019).

....

b. Has pled guilty or nolo contendere to, or been found guilty as a sexual offender for, a misdemeanor or attempted misdemeanor. The court may deviate from requiring an individual to register if the court first finds the individual is no more than three years older than the victim if the victim is a minor, the individual has not previously been convicted as a sexual offender or of a crime against a child, and the individual did not exhibit mental abnormality or predatory conduct in the commission of the offense.

Additionally, “a crime against a child” potentially requiring registration includes all prostitution-related offenses under chapter 12.1-29, “in which the victim is a minor or is otherwise of the age required for the act to be a crime or an attempt or conspiracy to commit these offenses.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-15(1)(a).

**Legal Components:**

- 3.1 Penalties for trafficking a child for sexual exploitation are as high as federal penalties.
- 3.2 Creating and distributing child sexual abuse material (CSAM) carries penalties as high as similar federal offenses.
- 3.3 Using the Internet or electronic communications to lure, entice, recruit, or sell commercial sex acts with a minor is a separate crime or results in an enhanced penalty for traffickers.
- 3.4 Financial penalties for traffickers, including asset forfeiture, are sufficiently high.
- 3.5 Convicted traffickers are required to register as sex offenders.
- 3.6 Laws relating to parental custody and termination of parental rights include sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) offenses as grounds for sole custody or termination in order to prevent traffickers from exploiting their parental rights as a form of control.

**Legal Analysis:**

- 3.1 Penalties for trafficking a child for sexual exploitation are as high as federal penalties.

Convicted traffickers face a class AA felony punishable by a maximum penalty of life imprisonment if convicted of trafficking an individual under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-02 or sexual servitude under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-04 when the victim is a minor. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-41-02(3), 12.1-41-04(3), 12.1-32-01(1). N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-02 (Facilitating prostitution) which makes it a crime to, among other things, “[k]nowingly solicit[] a person to patronize a prostitute” or to “[k]nowingly procure[] a prostitute for a patron,” is punishable as a class A felony if the actor intentionally causes another to remain a prostitute by force, coercion, threat, or deception, or the prostitute is the actor’s spouse or ward, or a person for whose care, protection, or support the actor is responsible. Otherwise it is a class C felony. A Class A felony is punishable by imprisonment up to twenty years, a fine of \$20,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(2). A Class C felony carries a penalty of imprisonment up to five years, a \$10,000 fine, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(4). N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-02(1) (Use of a minor in a sexual performance) establishes a Class A felony when an individual “knowing the character and content of a performance<sup>20</sup> . . . employs . . . a minor to engage in sexual conduct during a performance . . . .”

A trafficker could also be charged with the age-neutral offense under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-01(Promoting prostitution). N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-01(1)(a) makes it a crime to “[o]perate[] a prostitution business or house of prostitution.” A violation of this provision is a Class A misdemeanor unless the “actor owns, controls, manages, or otherwise supervises the prostitution business or house of prostitution,” in which case it is a Class C felony. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-01(2).

In comparison, if the victim is under the age of 14, a conviction under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) for child sex trafficking is punishable by 15 years to life imprisonment and a fine not to exceed \$250,000. 18 U.S.C. §§ 1591(b)(1), 3559(a)(1), 3571(b)(3). If the victim is between the ages of 14–17, a conviction is punishable by 10 years to life imprisonment and a fine not to exceed \$250,000. 18 U.S.C. §§ 1591(b)(2), 3559(a)(1), 3571(b)(3). A conviction is punishable by mandatory life imprisonment, however, if the trafficker has a prior conviction for a federal sex offense<sup>21</sup> against a minor. 18 U.S.C. § 3559(e)(1).

<sup>20</sup> Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-01(5) (Definitions), “‘Sexual performance’ means any performance which includes sexual conduct by a minor.”

<sup>21</sup> See *supra* note 10.

3.2 *Creating and distributing child sexual abuse material (CSAM) carries penalties as high as similar federal offenses.*

Several statutes prohibit the use of a minor to create child sexual abuse material (CSAM), as well as subsequently producing, promoting, and distributing the materials.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-03 (Promoting or directing an obscene sexual performance by a minor) states, “A person is guilty of a class A felony if, knowing the character and content of a performance, that person produces, directs, or promotes<sup>22</sup> any obscene performance which includes sexual conduct by a person who was a minor at the time of the performance.” A Class A felony is punishable by imprisonment up to 20 years, a \$20,000 fine, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(2). This offense is also subject to the enhanced penalties in N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-04.2.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.1-03(2) (Promoting obscenity to minors—Minor performing in obscene performance) makes it a Class C felony “to permit a minor to participate in a performance which is harmful to minors.”<sup>23</sup> A Class C felony is punishable by imprisonment up to five years, a fine of \$10,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(4).

Lastly, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-04 (Promoting a sexual performance by a minor) is a Class B felony punishable by imprisonment up to ten years and possible fine of \$20,000. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(3). The provision states, “A person is guilty of a class C felony if, knowing the character and content of a performance, that person produces, directs, or promotes any performance which includes sexual conduct by a person who was a minor at the time of the performance.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-04.

In comparison, if the victim is under the age of 14, a conviction under the TVPA for child sex trafficking is punishable by 15 years to life imprisonment and a fine not to exceed \$250,000. 18 U.S.C. §§ 1591(b)(1), 3559(a)(1), 3571(b)(3). If the victim is between the ages of 14–17, a conviction is punishable by 10 years to life imprisonment and a fine not to exceed \$250,000. 18 U.S.C. §§ 1591(b)(2), 3559(a)(1), 3571(b)(3). A conviction is punishable by mandatory life imprisonment, however, if the trafficker has a prior conviction for a federal sex offense<sup>24</sup> against a minor. 18 U.S.C. § 3559(e)(1). Additionally, a federal conviction for distribution of CSAM<sup>25</sup> is generally punishable by imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine not to exceed \$250,000.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-01(3) (Definitions—Sexual Performances by Children) defines “promote” as “to procure, manufacture, issue, sell, give, provide, lend, mail, deliver, transfer, transmit, ship, transport, publish, distribute, circulate, disseminate, present, exhibit, or advertise.”

<sup>23</sup> “Harmful to minors” is defined in N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.1-02(2) (Promoting obscenity to minors—Definitions) to mean

that quality of any description or representation, in whatever form of sexual conduct or sexual excitement, when such description or representation:

- a. Considered as a whole, appeals to the prurient sexual interest of minors;
- b. Is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community in North Dakota as a whole with respect to what is suitable material for minors; and
- c. Considered as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors.

<sup>24</sup> See *supra* note 10.

<sup>25</sup> 18 U.S.C. §§ 2252(a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(3) (Certain activities relating to material involving the sexual exploitation of minors), 2252A(a)(2), (a)(3) (Certain activities relating to material constituting or containing child pornography), 1466A(a) (Obscene visual representations of the sexual abuse of children).

<sup>26</sup> 18 U.S.C. §§ 2252(b) (stating that a conviction under subsection (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) is punishable by imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine), 2252A(b)(1) (a conviction is punishable by imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine), 1466A(a), (b) (stating that a conviction under subsection (a) is “subject to the penalties provided in section 2252A(b)(1),” imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine, while a conviction under subsection (b) is “subject to the penalties provided in section 2252A(b)(2),” imprisonment up to 10 years, a fine, or both); see also 18 U.S.C §§



Subsequent convictions, however, are punishable by imprisonment up to 40 years and a fine not to exceed \$250,000.<sup>27</sup>

3.3 *Using the Internet or electronic communications to lure, entice, recruit, or sell commercial sex acts with a minor is a separate crime or results in an enhanced penalty for traffickers.*

Using the Internet to initiate or engage in communications to invite or induce minors to engage in sexual acts is prohibited under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-05.1 (Luring minors by computer or other electronic means). Although the offense does not specifically refer to a commercial sexual arrangement, it may apply to CSEC situations. Subsection (1) states,

An adult is guilty of luring minors by computer or other electronic means when:

- a. The adult knows the character and content of a communication that, in whole or in part, implicitly or explicitly discusses or depicts actual or simulated nudity, sexual acts, sexual contact, sadomasochistic abuse, or other sexual performances and uses any computer communication system or other electronic means that allows the input, output, examination, or transfer of data or programs from one computer or electronic device to another to initiate or engage in such communication with a person the adult believes to be a minor; and
- b. By means of that communication the adult importunes, invites, or induces a person the adult believes to be a minor to engage in sexual acts or to have sexual contact with the adult, or to engage in a sexual performance, obscene sexual performance, or sexual conduct for the adult's benefit, satisfaction, lust, passions, or sexual desires.

This offense has varying degrees of penalties depending on the age of the offender and the victim. It is a Class A misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 360 days, a fine of \$3,000 if the offender is less than 22 and “reasonably believes the minor” is 15-17, or both. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-20-05.1(2), 12.1-32-01(5). It is a Class C felony with a maximum penalty of imprisonment for five years, a fine of \$10,000 if the adult is less than 22 and “reasonably believes the minor is under” 15, or if the adult is 22 or older and “reasonably believes the minor is” 15-17, or both. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-20-05.1(2), 12.1-32-01(4). Finally, it is a Class B felony with a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 10 years, a fine of \$20,000 if the adult is 22 or older and “reasonably believes the minor is under” 15, or both. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-20-05.1(2), 12.1-32-01(3). “The court shall sentence an adult convicted of a class B or class C felony under this section to serve a term of imprisonment of at least one year, except the court may sentence an individual to less than one year if the individual did not take a substantial step toward meeting with the minor.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-05.1(2).

3.4 *Financial penalties for traffickers, including asset forfeiture, are sufficiently high.*

Various fines are associated with crimes traffickers commit but no fines apply to traffickers convicted under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-02 (Trafficking an individual) or § 12.1-41-04 (Sexual servitude) when the victim is a minor because the penalty structure for Class AA felonies does not include a fine. However, traffickers face fines if convicted under N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-29-02 (Facilitating prostitution) which is punishable as a Class A felony with a fine of \$20,000 “if the actor intentionally causes another to remain a prostitute by force, coercion, threat, or deception, or the prostitute is the actor's spouse or ward, or a person for whose care,

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3559(a)(1) (classifying all of the above listed offenses as felonies), 3571(b)(3) (providing a fine up to \$250,000 for any felony conviction).

<sup>27</sup> 18 U.S.C. §§ 2252(b) (stating if a person has a prior conviction under subsection (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) or a list of other statutes, a conviction is punishable by a fine and imprisonment for 15–40 years), 2252A(b)(1) (stating if a person has a prior conviction under subsection (a)(2), (a)(3), or a list of other statutes, a conviction is punishable by a fine and imprisonment for 15–40 years), 1466A(a), (b) (stating that the penalty scheme for section 2252A(b) applies); *see also* 18 U.S.C. §§ 3559(a)(1) (classifying all of the above listed offenses as felonies), 3571(b)(3) (providing a fine up to \$250,000 for any felony conviction).

protection, or support the actor is responsible.” N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-29-02(1)(a)–(b), (2), 12.1-32-01(2). Otherwise, a trafficker convicted of facilitating prostitution faces a Class C felony with a possible fine of \$10,000. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-29-02(2), 12.1-32-01(4). Traffickers convicted of the age-neutral offense under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-01(1)(a) (Promoting prostitution) face a Class A misdemeanor with a possible fine of \$3,000. N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-29-01(2), 12.1-32-01(5). However, a trafficker faces a Class C felony and a possible \$10,000 fine for promoting prostitution under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-01 if the trafficker “owns, controls, manages, or otherwise supervises the prostitution business or house of prostitution.” N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-29-01(2), 12.1-32-01(4). The trafficker may also be guilty of promoting prostitution and face a Class C felony if the trafficker “[i]nduces or otherwise intentionally causes another to become engaged in sexual activity as a business,” or “[k]nowingly procures a prostitute for a prostitution business or a house of prostitution.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-01.

Fines may be assessed against traffickers who create child sexual abuse material (CSAM). As a Class A felony, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-02 (Use of a minor in a sexual performance) carries a possible fine of \$20,000. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(2).

Traffickers convicted under the human trafficking law face mandatory restitution. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-09(1), (2) (Restitution) states,

1. The court shall order a person convicted of an offense under section § 12.1-41-02 (Trafficking an individual), 12.1-41-03 (Forced labor), or 12.1-41-04 (Sexual servitude) to pay restitution to the victim of the offense for:
  - a. Expenses incurred or reasonably certain to be incurred by the victim as a result of the offense, including reasonable attorney’s fees and costs; and
  - b. An amount equal to the greatest of the following, with no reduction for expenses the defendant incurred to maintain the victim:
    - (1) The gross income to the defendant for, or the value to the defendant of, the victim's labor or services or sexual activity;
    - (2) The amount the defendant contracted to pay the victim; or
    - (3) The value of the victim's labor or services or sexual activity, calculated under the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, [29 U.S.C. 201 et seq.] or section 34-06-22, whichever is higher, even if the provisions do not apply to the victim's labor or services or sexual activity.
2. The court shall order restitution under subsection 1 even if the victim is unavailable to accept payment of restitution.

A trafficker may also be required to pay restitution under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08 (Hearing prior to ordering restitution, reparation, or reimbursement of indigent defense costs and expenses—Conditions—Collection of restitution for insufficient funds checks—Continuing appropriation), which provides for mandatory restitution only where the victim suffered pecuniary damages, and for discretionary restitution in other cases. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08(1)<sup>28</sup> states in part,

Before imposing restitution or reparation as a sentence or condition of probation, the court shall hold a hearing on the matter with notice to the prosecuting attorney and to the defendant as to the nature and amount of restitution. The court, when sentencing a person adjudged guilty of criminal activities that have resulted in pecuniary damages, in addition to any other sentence the court may impose, shall order that the defendant make restitution to the victim or other recipient as determined by the court . . . .

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08(1) further sets forth items the court is to consider “[i]n determining whether to order restitution . . . .” One of those items, subsection (1)(a), states that “[t]he defendant may be required as part

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<sup>28</sup> See *supra* note 15.

of the sentence imposed by the court to pay the prescribed treatment costs for a victim of a sexual offense as defined in chapters 12.1-20 [Sex offenses] and 12.1-27.2 [Sexual performances by children].”

Traffickers are also subject to discretionary civil asset forfeiture proceedings. N.D. Cent. Code § 29-31.1-04(1) (Forfeiture proceedings) states, “Forfeiture is a civil proceeding not dependent upon a prosecution for, or conviction of, a criminal offense and forfeiture proceedings are separate and distinct from any related criminal action.”<sup>29</sup> Under N.D. Cent. Code § 29-31.1-01(1) “forfeitable property” is defined as including,

....

b. Property that has been used or is intended to be used to facilitate the commission of a criminal offense or to avoid detection or apprehension of a person committing a criminal offense . . . .

c. Property that is acquired as or from the proceeds of a criminal offense.

d. Property offered or given to another as an inducement for the commission of a criminal offense.

e. A vehicle or other means of transportation used in the commission of a felony, the escape from the scene of the commission of a felony, or in the transportation of property that is the subject matter of a felony.

....

N.D. Cent. Code § 29-31.1-03 (Seizure of forfeitable property) states in part, “Forfeitable property may be seized whenever and wherever the property is found within this state. Forfeitable property may be seized by taking custody of the property or by serving upon the person in possession of the property a notice of forfeiture and seizure.” N.D. Cent. Code. §29-31.1-03 also governs disposition of forfeited property and states,

If the court finds that the forfeiture is warranted, an order transferring ownership to the seizing agency must be entered and the property must be delivered to the seizing agency for disposition as directed by the court. Property that has been seized for forfeiture, and is not already secured as evidence in a criminal case, must be safely secured or stored by the agency that caused its seizure.

### 3.5 *Convicted traffickers are required to register as sex offenders.*

Convicted traffickers will be required to register as sex offenders. In North Dakota, offenders are required to register both for offenses against children and sexual offenses under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-15(2) (Offenders against children and sexual offenders—Sexually violent predators—Registration requirement—Penalty). Under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-15(1)(g),<sup>30</sup> “sexual offender” is defined as

a person who has pled guilty to or been found guilty, including juvenile delinquent adjudications, of a violation of section 12.1-20-03 [Gross sexual imposition], 12.1-20-03.1 [Continuous sexual abuse of a child], 12.1-20-04 [Sexual imposition], 12.1-20-05 [Corruption or solicitation of minors], 12.1-20-05.1 [Luring minors by computer or other electronic means], 12.1-20-06 [Sexual abuse of wards], 12.1-20-06.1 [Sexual exploitation by therapist], 12.1-20-07 [Sexual assault] except for subdivision a, . . . chapter 12.1-27.2 [Sexual performances by children (including child pornography related offenses)], or subsection 2 of section 12.1-22-03.1, subdivision b of subsection 1 of section 12.1-41.02 [Trafficking an individual], section 12.1-41-04 [Sexual servitude], . . . or an equivalent offense from another court in the United States, a tribal court, or court of another country, or an attempt or conspiracy to commit these offenses.

However, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-15(2)(b) states in part,

The court shall require an individual to register by stating this requirement on the court records, if that

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<sup>29</sup> See *supra* note 14.

<sup>30</sup> See *supra* note 19.

individual:

....

b. Has pled guilty or nolo contendere to, or been found guilty as a sexual offender for, a misdemeanor or attempted misdemeanor. The court may deviate from requiring an individual to register if the court first finds the individual is no more than three years older than the victim if the victim is a minor, the individual has not previously been convicted as a sexual offender or of a crime against a child, and the individual did not exhibit mental abnormality or predatory conduct in the commission of the offense.

Additionally, registration is also required for defendants convicted of “a crime against a child,” which includes all prostitution related offenses under chapter 12.1-29, “in which the victim is a minor or is otherwise of the age required for the act to be a crime or an attempt or conspiracy to commit these offenses.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-15(1)(a).

3.6 *Laws relating to parental custody and termination of parental rights include sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) offenses as grounds for sole custody or termination in order to prevent traffickers from exploiting their parental rights as a form of control.*

Under N.D. Cent. Code § 27-20-44(1)<sup>31</sup> (Termination of parental rights),

The court by order may terminate the parental rights of a parent with respect to the parent's child if:

- a. The parent has abandoned the child;
- b. The child is subjected to aggravated circumstances as defined under subsection 3 of section 27-20-02 [Definitions];
- c. The child is a deprived child<sup>32</sup> and the court finds:
  - (1) The conditions and causes of the deprivation are likely to continue or will not be remedied and that by reason thereof the child is suffering or will probably suffer serious physical, mental, moral, or emotional harm; or
  - (2) The child has been in foster care, in the care, custody, and control of the department, or a county social service board, or human service zone, or, in cases arising out of an adjudication by the juvenile court that a child is an unruly child, the division of juvenile services, for at least four hundred fifty out of the previous six hundred sixty nights; or
- d. The written consent of the parent acknowledged before the court has been given.
- e. The parent has pled guilty or nolo contendere to, or has been found guilty of engaging in a sexual act under section 12.1-20-03 [Gross sexual imposition] or 12.1-20-04 [Sexual imposition], the sexual act led to the birth of the parent's child, and termination of the parental rights of the parent is in the best interests of the child.

“Aggravated circumstances” is defined in part in N.D. Cent. Code § 27-20-02(3)(a), (c), (d) as “circumstances in which a parent: a. Abandons, tortures, chronically abuses, or sexually abuses a child; . . . c. Engages in conduct prohibited under sections 12.1-20-01 through 12.1-20-08 or chapter 12.1-27.2 [Sexual performances by children], in which a child is the victim or intended victim; d. Engages in conduct that constitutes one of the following crimes, or of an offense under the laws of another jurisdiction which requires proof of substantially similar elements: (1) A violation of . . . 14-09-22 [Abuse of child – Penalty] in which the victim is another child of the parent . . .” The provisions in N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-20-01 through 12.1-20-08, include gross sexual imposition, sexual imposition, continuous sexual abuse of a child, corruption or solicitation of minors, luring minors by computer or other electronic means, and sexual assault.

<sup>31</sup> The text of N.D. Cent. Code § 27-20-44 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of Senate Bills 2185 and 2124 during the 2019 Regular Session of the 66th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota (effective August 1, 2019 and January 1, 2020, respectively).

<sup>32</sup> N.D. Cent. Code § 27-20-02(8)(h) states, “‘Deprived child’ means a child who . . . [i]s a victim of human trafficking as defined in title 12.1.”

Additionally, N.D. Cent. Code § 27-20-20.1 (Petition to terminate parental rights—When sought—Definitions) sets out certain circumstances, subject to some exceptions, when “a petition for termination of parental rights must be filed,” including, under subsection (2)(c)(1), “A violation of . . . subdivision a of subsection 1 of section 14-09-22 in which the victim is another child of the parent.” N.D. Cent. Code § 14-09-22(1) (Abuse or neglect of child) states,

Except as provided in subsection 2 or 3, a parent, adult family or household member, guardian, or other custodian of any child, who willfully inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child mental injury or bodily injury, substantial bodily injury, or serious bodily injury as defined by section 12.1-01-04<sup>33</sup> is guilty of a class C felony except if the victim of an offense under this section is under the age of six years in which case the offense is a class B felony.

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<sup>33</sup> N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-01-04(4), (27), (29) (General definitions) defines “bodily injury” as “any impairment of physical condition, including physical pain,” “serious bodily injury” as “bodily injury that creates a substantial risk of death or which causes serious permanent disfigurement, unconsciousness, extreme pain, permanent loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ, a bone fracture, or impediment of air flow or blood flow to the brain or lungs,” and “substantial bodily injury” as “a substantial temporary disfigurement, loss, or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ.”

***Legal Components:***

- 4.1 *The acts of assisting, enabling, or financially benefitting from child sex trafficking are included as criminal offenses in the state sex trafficking statute.*
- 4.2 *Financial penalties, including asset forfeiture laws, are in place for those who benefit financially from or aid and assist in committing domestic minor sex trafficking.*
- 4.3 *Promoting and selling child sex tourism is illegal.*
- 4.4 *Promoting and selling child sexual abuse material (CSAM) carries penalties as high as similar federal offenses.*

***Legal Analysis:***

- 4.1 *The acts of assisting, enabling, or financially benefitting from child sex trafficking are included as criminal offenses in the state sex trafficking statute.*

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-02 (Trafficking an individual) does not criminalize assisting, enabling or financially benefitting from human trafficking, but it may apply to some facilitators who knowingly recruit, transport, transfer, harbor, receive, provide, obtain, isolate, maintain, or entice individuals in furtherance of sexual servitude. This crime is a class AA felony when minors are being trafficked. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(1).

Business entities that commit a violation under N.D. Cent. Code Chapter 12.1-41 (Uniform Act on Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking) face specific financial penalties. Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-07 (Business entity liability),

- 1. A person that is a business entity may be prosecuted for an offense under sections 12.1-41-02 through 12.1-41-06 [12.1-41-02 – Trafficking an individual.; 12.1-41-03 – Forced labor.; 12.1-41-04 – Sexual servitude.; 12.1-41-05 – Patronizing a victim of sexual servitude.; 12.1-41-06 – Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity.] as provided by chapter 12.1-03 [Accomplices – Corporations – Agents].
- 2. When a person that is a business entity is prosecuted for an offense under sections 12.1-41-02 through 12.1-41-06, the court may consider the severity of the entity's conduct and order penalties in addition to those otherwise provided for the offense, including:
  - a. A fine of not more than one million dollars per offense;
  - b. Disgorgement of profit from activity in violation of this chapter; and
  - c. Debarment from state and local government contracts.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-02 (Facilitating prostitution) also applies to facilitators. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-02(1)(c), (d) makes it a crime, among other things, when an individual does the following:

- c. Knowingly leases or otherwise permits a place controlled by the actor, alone or in association with others, to be regularly used for prostitution, promoting prostitution, or facilitating prostitution, or fails to make reasonable effort to abate such use by ejecting the tenant, notifying law enforcement authorities, or taking other legally available means; or
- d. Knowingly induces or otherwise intentionally causes another to remain a prostitute. A person who is supported in whole or substantial part by the proceeds of prostitution, other than the prostitute or the prostitute's minor child or a person whom the prostitute is required by law to support, is presumed to be knowingly inducing or intentionally causing another to remain a prostitute.

Facilitating prostitution is a class A felony “if the actor intentionally causes another to remain a prostitute by force, coercion, threat, or deception, or the prostitute is the actor’s spouse or ward, or a person for whose care, protection, or support the actor is responsible. Otherwise it is a class C felony.” N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-29-02(2), 12.1-32-01(2), (4).

4.1.1 Recommendation: Amend N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-02 (Trafficking an individual) to prohibit financially benefiting from human trafficking and sexual servitude.

4.2 *Financial penalties, including asset forfeiture laws, are in place for those who benefit financially from or aid and assist in committing domestic minor sex trafficking.*

Various fines are associated with crimes facilitators commit. For facilitating prostitution, a facilitator faces a Class C felony with a fine of \$10,000, or a Class A felony with a fine of \$20,000 “if the actor intentionally causes another to remain a prostitute by force, coercion, threat, or deception, or the prostitute is the actor’s spouse or ward, or a person for whose care, protection, or support the actor is responsible.” N.D. Cent. Code §§ 12.1-29-02(1)(a)–(b), (2), 12.1-32-01(2), (4).

If convicted under the human trafficking law, facilitators face mandatory restitution. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-09(1), (2) (Restitution) states,

1. The court shall order a person convicted of an offense under section § 12.1-41-02 (Trafficking an individual), 12.1-41-03 (Forced labor), or 12.1-41-04 (Sexual servitude) to pay restitution to the victim of the offense for:
  - a. Expenses incurred or reasonably certain to be incurred by the victim as a result of the offense, including reasonable attorney’s fees and costs; and
  - b. An amount equal to the greatest of the following, with no reduction for expenses the defendant incurred to maintain the victim:
    - (1) The gross income to the defendant for, or the value to the defendant of, the victim’s labor or services or sexual activity;
    - (2) The amount the defendant contracted to pay the victim; or
    - (3) The value of the victim’s labor or services or sexual activity, calculated under the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, [29 U.S.C. 201 et seq.] or section 34-06-22, whichever is higher, even if the provisions do not apply to the victim’s labor or services or sexual activity.
2. The court shall order restitution under subsection 1 even if the victim is unavailable to accept payment of restitution.

A facilitator may also be required to pay restitution under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08 (Hearing prior to ordering restitution, reparation, or reimbursement of indigent defense costs and expenses—Conditions—Collection of restitution for insufficient funds checks—Continuing appropriation), which provides for mandatory restitution only where the victim suffered pecuniary damages. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08(1)<sup>34</sup> states in part,

Before imposing restitution or reparation as a sentence or condition of probation, the court shall hold a hearing on the matter with notice to the prosecuting attorney and to the defendant as to the nature and amount of restitution. The court, when sentencing a person adjudged guilty of criminal activities that have resulted in pecuniary damages, in addition to any other sentence the court may impose, shall order that the defendant make restitution to the victim or other recipient as determined by the court . . .

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08(1) further sets forth items the court is to consider “[i]n determining whether to order restitution . . . .” One of those items, subsection (1)(a), states that “[t]he defendant may be required as part of the sentence imposed by the court to pay the prescribed treatment costs for a victim of a sexual offense as defined in chapters 12.1-20 [Sex offenses] and 12.1-27.2 [Sexual performances by children].”

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<sup>34</sup> See *supra* note 15.

Through civil forfeiture proceedings facilitators could be subject to property forfeiture. “Forfeiture is a civil proceeding not dependent upon a prosecution for, or conviction of, a criminal offense and forfeiture proceedings are separate and distinct from any related criminal action.”<sup>35</sup> N.D. Cent. Code § 29-31.1-04 (Forfeiture proceedings). N.D. Cent. Code § 29-31.1-01(1) defines “forfeitable property” as including the following:

- a. Property that is illegally possessed or is contraband.
- b. Property that has been used or is intended to be used to facilitate the commission of a criminal offense or to avoid detection or apprehension of a person committing a criminal offense . . . .
- c. Property that is acquired as or from the proceeds of a criminal offense.
- d. Property offered or given to another as an inducement for the commission of a criminal offense.
- e. A vehicle or other means of transportation used in the commission of a felony, the escape from the scene of the commission of a felony, or in the transportation of property that is the subject matter of a felony.

N.D. Cent. Code § 29-31.1-03 (Seizure of forfeitable property) states in part, “Forfeitable property may be seized whenever and wherever the property is found within this state. Forfeitable property may be seized by taking custody of the property or by serving upon the person in possession of the property a notice of forfeiture and seizure.” N.D. Cent. Code. §29-31.1-03, also governs the disposition of property and, in relevant part, requires

If the court finds that the forfeiture is warranted, an order transferring ownership to the seizing agency must be entered and the property must be delivered to the seizing agency for disposition as directed by the court. Property that has been seized for forfeiture, and is not already secured as evidence in a criminal case, must be safely secured or stored by the agency that caused its seizure.

#### 4.3 *Promoting and selling child sex tourism is illegal.*

There are no laws in North Dakota related to sex tourism.

- 4.3.1 Recommendation: Enact a law prohibiting selling or offering to sell travel services that include or facilitate travel for the purpose of engaging in commercial sexual exploitation of a minor or prostitution of a minor, if occurring in North Dakota.

#### 4.4 *Promoting and selling child sexual abuse material (CSAM) carries penalties as high as similar federal offenses.*

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-03 (Promoting or directing an obscene sexual performance by a minor) states, “A person is guilty of a class A felony if, knowing the character and content of a performance, that person produces, directs, or promotes any obscene performance which includes sexual conduct by a person who was a minor at the time of the performance.” A Class A felony typically carries a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 20 years, a fine up to \$20,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(2).

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.1-03(2) (Promoting obscenity to minors—Minor performing in obscene performance) makes it a Class C felony “to permit a minor to participate in a performance which is harmful to minors.”<sup>36</sup> A Class C felony is punishable by imprisonment up to five years, a fine of \$10,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code 12.1-32-01(4).

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<sup>35</sup> See *supra* note 14.

<sup>36</sup> “Harmful to minors” is defined in N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.1-02(2) (Promoting obscenity to minors—Definitions) to mean

that quality of any description or representation, in whatever form of sexual conduct or sexual excitement, when such description or representation:

- a. Considered as a whole, appeals to the prurient sexual interest of minors;



N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-04 (Promoting a sexual performance by a minor) makes it a Class B felony if “knowing the character and content of a performance, [a] person produces, directs, or promotes any performance which includes sexual conduct by a person who was a minor at the time of the performance.” A Class B felony is punishable by imprisonment up to ten years, a fine of \$20,000, or both. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-01(3). This offense is also subject to the enhanced penalties in N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-04.2.

These offenses are subject to enhanced penalties. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-04.2(1) (Sexual performance by a minor—Enhanced penalties) states, “[a] person who commits an offense under this chapter and who acts in the course of a commercial or for-profit activity or transaction in which the offender had or shared ownership, control, managerial responsibility, or a financial interest other than wages is subject to” a fine of up to \$10,000 for individual offenders or a fine up to \$25,000 for a “corporation, limited liability company, association, partnership, or other legal entity.” Subsequent offenses receive increased penalties of up to \$50,000 for individuals and up to \$100,000 for a “corporation, limited liability company, association, partnership, or other legal entity.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.2-04.2(2).

The obscenity laws serve as a means for prosecuting promoters, as well as sellers. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.1-01(1) (Obscenity—Definitions—Dissemination—Classification of offenses) makes it a Class C felony “if, knowing of its character, [a] person disseminates obscene material or if the person produces, transports, or sends obscene material with intent that it be disseminated.” “Disseminate” in this section means “to sell, lease, rent, advertise, broadcast, transmit, exhibit, or distribute for pecuniary gain.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-27.1-01(6).

In comparison, if the victim is under the age of 14, a conviction under the TVPA for child sex trafficking is punishable by 15 years to life imprisonment and a fine not to exceed \$250,000. 18 U.S.C. §§ 1591(b)(1), 3559(a)(1), 3571(b)(3). If the victim is between the ages of 14–17, a conviction is punishable by 10 years to life imprisonment and a fine not to exceed \$250,000. 18 U.S.C. §§ 1591(b)(2), 3559(a)(1), 3571(b)(3). A conviction is punishable by mandatory life imprisonment, however, if the trafficker has a prior conviction for a federal sex offense<sup>37</sup> against a minor. 18 U.S.C. § 3559(e)(1). Additionally, a federal conviction for distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM)<sup>38</sup> is generally punishable by imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine not to exceed \$250,000.<sup>39</sup> Subsequent convictions, however, are punishable by imprisonment up to 40 years and a fine not to exceed \$250,000.<sup>40</sup>

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- b. Is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community in North Dakota as a whole with respect to what is suitable material for minors; and
  - c. Considered as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors.

<sup>37</sup> See *supra* note 10.

<sup>38</sup> 18 U.S.C. §§ 2252(a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(3) (Certain activities relating to material involving the sexual exploitation of minors), 2252A(a)(2), (a)(3) (Certain activities relating to material constituting or containing child pornography), 1466A(a) (Obscene visual representations of the sexual abuse of children).

<sup>39</sup> 18 U.S.C. §§ 2252(b) (stating that a conviction under subsection (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) is punishable by imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine), 2252A(b)(1) (a conviction is punishable by imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine), 1466A(a), (b) (stating that a conviction under subsection (a) is “subject to the penalties provided in section 2252A(b)(1),” imprisonment for 5–20 years and a fine, while a conviction under subsection (b) is “subject to the penalties provided in section 2252A(b)(2),” imprisonment up to 10 years, a fine, or both); see also 18 U.S.C. §§ 3559(a)(1) (classifying all of the above listed offenses as felonies), 3571(b)(3) (providing a fine up to \$250,000 for any felony conviction).

<sup>40</sup> 18 U.S.C. §§ 2252(b) (stating if a person has a prior conviction under subsection (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) or a list of other statutes, a conviction is punishable by a fine and imprisonment for 15–40 years), 2252A(b)(1) (stating if a person has a prior conviction under subsection (a)(2), (a)(3), or a list of other statutes, a conviction is punishable by a fine and imprisonment for 15–40 years), 1466A(a), (b) (stating that the penalty scheme for section 2252A(b) applies); see also 18 U.S.C. §§ 3559(a)(1) (classifying all of the above listed offenses as felonies), 3571(b)(3) (providing a fine up to \$250,000 for any felony conviction).

**Legal Components:**

- 5.1 *Victims under the core child sex trafficking offense include all commercially sexually exploited children.*
- 5.2 *The state sex trafficking statute expressly prohibits a defendant from asserting a defense based on the willingness of a minor under 18 to engage in the commercial sex act.*
- 5.3 *State law prohibits the criminalization of minors under 18 for prostitution offenses.*
- 5.4 *State law provides a non-punitive avenue to specialized services through one or more points of entry.*
- 5.5 *Child sex trafficking is identified as a type of abuse and neglect within child protection statutes.*
- 5.6 *The definition of “caregiver” or another related term in the child welfare statutes is not a barrier to a sex trafficked child accessing the protection of child welfare.*
- 5.7 *Crime victims’ compensation is specifically available to a child victim of sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).*
- 5.8 *Victim-friendly procedures and protections are provided in the trial process for minors under 18.*
- 5.9 *Child sex trafficking victims may vacate delinquency adjudications and expunge related records for prostitution and other offenses arising from trafficking victimization, without a waiting period.*
- 5.10 *Victim restitution and civil remedies for victims of domestic minor sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) are authorized by law.*
- 5.11 *Statutes of limitations for civil and criminal actions for child sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) offenses are eliminated or lengthened to allow prosecutors and victims a realistic opportunity to pursue criminal action and legal remedies.*

**Legal Analysis:**

- 5.1 *Victims under the core child sex trafficking offense include all commercially sexually exploited children.<sup>41</sup>*

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-02 (Trafficking an individual), North Dakota’s human trafficking offense, does not include all commercial sexual exploitation of minors. Under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-02, when the victim is a minor, means of force, fraud, or coercion are not required.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, several trafficking related laws apply to buyer conduct. However, the core human trafficking law does not apply to buyers; thus, buying commercial sex with a person who is under the age of eighteen does not constitute human trafficking.<sup>43</sup> As such, the offense of human trafficking, under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-02, requires that a trafficker or controlling third party be identified. Consequently, not all commercially sexually exploited children are identifiable as victims under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-02.

- 5.1.1 **Recommendation:** Amend the definition of N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-02 (Trafficking an individual) so that all commercially sexually exploited children are identifiable as victims and eligible for protections pursuant to their victim status.

<sup>41</sup> See generally SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL, “Eliminating the Third Party Control Barrier to Identifying Juvenile Sex Trafficking Victims,” JuST Response Policy Paper (2015), [http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Policy-Paper\\_Eliminating-Third-Party-Control\\_Final1.pdf](http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Policy-Paper_Eliminating-Third-Party-Control_Final1.pdf) (discussing need to include all commercially sexually exploited children within sex trafficking definitions and corresponding need to include buyer conduct in core sex trafficking offenses regardless of whether victim is under control of a third party).

<sup>42</sup> See *supra* discussion in Component 1.1.

<sup>43</sup> See *supra* discussion of buyer applicability in Component 2.1.

5.2 *The state sex trafficking statute expressly prohibits a defendant from asserting a defense based on the willingness of a minor to engage in the commercial sex act.*

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-04(2) (Sexual servitude) specifically prohibits a defense based on the willingness of the minor victim to engage in the commercial sex act.<sup>44</sup> It states in part, “It is not a defense in a prosecution under subdivision a of subsection 1<sup>45</sup> that the minor consented to engage in commercial sexual activity.”

5.3 *State law prohibits the criminalization of minors under 18 for prostitution offenses.*<sup>46</sup>

North Dakota’s prostitution law, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-03 (Prostitution), prohibits the criminalization of minors for prostitution offenses by restricting its application to adults. It states,

An adult is guilty of prostitution, a class B misdemeanor, if the adult:

1. Is an inmate of a house of prostitution or is otherwise engaged in sexual activity as a business;
2. Solicits another person with the intention of being hired to engage in sexual activity; or
3. Agrees to engage in sexual activity with another for money or other items of pecuniary value.

Criminal liability for minors for prostitution offenses and other offenses related to the minor’s victimization is also eliminated under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-12(1) (Immunity of minor). N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-12(1) states,

If the individual was a minor at the time of the offense and committed the offense as a direct result of being a victim, the individual is not criminally liable or subject to a juvenile delinquency proceeding under chapter 27-20 for:

- a. Prostitution under section 12.1-29-03;
- b. Misdemeanor forgery under section 12.1-24.01;
- c. Misdemeanor theft offenses under chapter 12.1-23;
- d. Insufficient funds or credit offenses under section 6-08-16;

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<sup>44</sup> Under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-17-08(1) (Consent as a defense),

When conduct is an offense because it causes or threatens bodily injury, consent to such conduct or to the infliction of such injury by all persons injured or threatened by the conduct is a defense if:

- a. Neither the injury inflicted nor the injury threatened is such as to jeopardize life or seriously impair health; . . . ; or
- c. The conduct and the injury are reasonably foreseeable hazards of an occupation or profession or of medical or scientific experimentation conducted by recognized methods, and the persons subjected to such conduct or injury, having been made aware of the risks involved, consent to the performance of the conduct or the infliction of the injury.

Under subsection (2),

Assent does not constitute consent, within the meaning of this section, if:

- a. It is given by a person who is legally incompetent to authorize the conduct charged to constitute the offense and such incompetence is manifest or known to the actor;
- b. It is given by a person who by reason of youth, mental disease or defect, or intoxication is manifestly unable or known by the actor to be unable to make a reasonable judgment as to the nature or harmfulness of the conduct charged to constitute the offense; or
- c. It is induced by force, duress, or deception.

<sup>45</sup> Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-04(1)(a), “A person commits the offense of sexual servitude if the person knowingly [m]aintains or makes available a minor for the purpose of engaging the minor in commercial sexual activity.”

<sup>46</sup> For more information regarding recent federal legislation impacting this component see: <http://go.sharedhope.org/stateimpactmemo>.

- e. Manufacture or possession of a controlled or counterfeit substance offenses under section 19-03.1-23; and
- f. Drug paraphernalia offenses under chapter 19-03.4.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-12(3) further states that “an individual who has engaged in commercial sexual activity is not criminally liable or subject to a juvenile delinquency proceeding under chapter 27-20 for prostitution if the individual was a minor at the time of the offense.”

Finally, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-12(2) provides child sex trafficking victims with an affirmative defense to certain felony charges resulting from their victimization, stating,

It is an affirmative defense to felony forgery, felony theft, and felony drug distribution that the individual was a minor at the time of the offense and committed the offense as a direct result of being a victim as defined by this chapter.

#### 5.4 *State law provides a non-punitive avenue to specialized services through one or more points of entry.*

A juvenile sex trafficking victim is not subject to delinquency charges for prostitution.<sup>47</sup> Instead, the child is “presumed to be a child in need of services under chapter 50-25.1 [Child abuse and neglect].” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-12(4) (Immunity of minor). However, Chapter 50-25.1 does not define “child in need of services,” nor does it refer to a specific, existing response. Resultantly, state law does not clearly provide commercially sexually exploited youth with a statutory avenue to services that are specialized to the needs of this population.

- 5.4.1 Recommendation: Amend North Dakota’s protective response for juvenile sex trafficking victims to provides an avenue to specialized services.<sup>48</sup>

#### 5.5 *Child sex trafficking is identified as a type of abuse and neglect within child protection statutes.*<sup>49</sup>

North Dakota’s child protection statutes expressly include child sex trafficking<sup>50</sup> as a form of neglect, but not as a form of abuse. N.D. Cent. Code § 50-25.1-02(3)<sup>51</sup> (Definitions—Child Abuse and Neglect) defines “abused child” as:

[A]n individual under the age of eighteen years who is suffering from abuse as defined in section 14-09-22<sup>52</sup> [Abuse of child – Penalty] caused by a person responsible for the child’s welfare and ‘sexually abused child’ means an individual under the age of eighteen years who is subjected by a person responsible for the child’s welfare, or by any individual, including a juvenile, who acts in violation of sections 12.1-20-01 through 12.1-20-07 [Sexual offenses, including luring a minor by computer and corruption or solicitation of minors], sections 12.1-20-11 through 12.1-20-12.2 [Non-commercial sexual offenses], . . . or chapter 12.1-27.2 [Sexual performances by children].

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<sup>47</sup> See *supra* Component 5.3 for discussion of state non-criminalization laws.

<sup>48</sup> The recommendation in this component is predicated upon the recommendation in 5.1 being simultaneously and previously enacted.

<sup>49</sup> For more information regarding recent federal legislation impacting this component see:

<http://go.sharedhope.org/stateimpactmemo>.

<sup>50</sup> The analysis in this component is predicated upon the recommendation in 5.1 being simultaneously or previously enacted.

<sup>51</sup> The text of N.D. Cent. Code § 50-25.1-02 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of House Bills 1108 and 1520 and Senate Bills 2245 and 2273 during the 2019 Regular Session of the 66th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota (effective August 1, 2019).

<sup>52</sup> North Dakota Century Code outlines “abuse” and “neglect” of a child as two distinct offenses. N.D. Cent. Code § 14-09-22 states,

In contrast, N.D. Cent. Code § 50-25.1-02(14)(h) defines “neglected child” as “a child who, due to the action or inaction of a person responsible for the child’s welfare . . . [i]s a victim of human trafficking as defined in title 12.1.”

5.6 *The definition of “caregiver” or another related term in the child welfare statutes is not a barrier to a sex trafficked child accessing the protection of child welfare.*

The definition of “neglected child” requires fault by a person responsible for the child’s welfare; specifically, N.D. Cent. Code § 50-25.1-02(14)(h)<sup>53</sup> (Definitions—Child Abuse and Neglect) defines “neglected child” as “a child who, due to the action or inaction of a person responsible for the child’s welfare<sup>54</sup> . . . [i]s a victim of human trafficking as defined in title 12.1.”

To the extent that a victim is identified as an “abused child” rather than as a “neglected child,” child welfare may be able to intervene under limited circumstances. N.D. Cent. Code § 50-25.1-02(3) states,

“Abused child” means an individual under the age of eighteen years who is suffering from abuse . . . caused by a person responsible for the child's welfare and “sexually abused child” means an individual

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1. Except as provided in subsection 2 or 3, a parent, adult family or household member, guardian, or other custodian of any child, who willfully inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child mental injury or bodily injury, substantial bodily injury, or serious bodily injury as defined by section 12.1-01-04 is guilty of a class C felony except if the victim of an offense under this section is under the age of six years in which case the offense is a class B felony.

2. A person who provides care, supervision, education, or guidance for a child unaccompanied by the child's parent, adult family or household member, guardian, or custodian in exchange for money, goods, or other services and who while providing such services commits an offense under this section is guilty of a class B felony. Any such person that commits, allows to be committed, or conspires to commit, against the child, a sex offense as defined in chapter 12.1-20 is subject to the penalties provided in that chapter.

3. A person who commits an offense under this section is guilty of a class B felony if the victim suffers permanent loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member or organ, except if the victim of the offense is under the age of six years in which case the offense is a class A felony.

4. A person who has pled guilty or nolo contendere to, or has been found guilty of an offense under this section must be sentenced to a minimum of one year imprisonment.

. . . .

Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 14-09-22.1, the offense of neglecting a child is committed when

A parent, adult family or household member, guardian, or other custodian of any child . . . willfully commits any of the following offenses . . . :

1. Fails to provide proper parental care or control, subsistence, education as required by law, or other care or control necessary for the child's physical, mental, or emotional health, or morals.

2. Permits the child to be, or fails to exercise reasonable diligence in preventing the child from being, in a disreputable place or associating with vagrants or vicious or immoral persons.

3. Permits the child to engage in, or fails to exercise reasonable diligence in preventing the child from engaging in, an occupation forbidden by the laws of this state or an occupation injurious to the child's health or morals or the health or morals of others.

The text of N.D. Cent. Code § 14-09-22 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of House Bills 1395 and 1396 during the 2019 Regular Session of the 66th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota (effective August 1, 2019).

<sup>53</sup> See *supra* note 51.

<sup>54</sup> N.D. Cent. Code § 50-25.1-02(1) (Definitions—Child Abuse and Neglect) defines “a person responsible for the child’s welfare” to include “a person who has responsibility for the care or supervision of a child and who is the child’s parent, an adult family member of the child, any member of the child’s household, the child’s guardian, or the child’s foster parent . . . .”

under the age of eighteen years who is subjected by a person responsible for the child's welfare, or by any individual, including a juvenile, who acts in violation of sections 12.1-20-01 through 12.1-20-07<sup>55</sup> [Sexual offenses, including luring a minor by computer and corruption or solicitation of minors], sections 12.1-20-11 through 12.1-20-12.2 [Non-commercial sexual offenses], . . . or chapter 12.1-27.2<sup>56</sup> [Sexual performances by children].

Therefore, the definition of “sexually abused child” is not restricted to conduct perpetrated by a person responsible for the child’s welfare for violations of N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-01 through § 12.1-20-07, § 12.1-20-11 through § 12.1-20-12.2, or chapter 12.1-27.2. However, these are non-commercial sex offenses that may not apply to juvenile sex trafficking victims.

5.6.1 Recommendation: Amend N.D. Cent. Code § 50-25.1-02 (Definitions—Child Abuse and Neglect) to allow child welfare to intervene in cases of child sex trafficking regardless of the child’s relationship to the perpetrator of the abuse.

5.7 *Crime victims’ compensation is specifically available to a child victim of sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).*

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-17(1) (Eligibility for benefit or service) expressly provides that human trafficking victims are entitled to victim compensation by stating, “A victim<sup>57</sup> is eligible for a benefit or service available through the state, including compensation under chapter 54-23.4, regardless of immigration status.”

Upon successful application for compensation, under N.D. Cent. Code § 54-23.4-02 (Award of compensation), a victim of a crime may be awarded “economic loss arising directly from criminally injurious conduct if satisfied by a preponderance of the evidence that the requirements for compensation have been met.” Under N.D. Cent. Code § 54-23.4-01(7), “economic loss” is defined as “economic detriment consisting only of allowable expense, work loss, replacement services loss, and, if injury causes death, dependent’s economic loss and dependent’s replacement services loss. Noneconomic detriment is not loss. The term includes economic detriment caused by pain and suffering or physical impairment.” N.D. Cent. Code § 54-23.4-01(7)(d) defines “noneconomic detriment” as “pain, suffering, inconvenience, physical impairment, and other nonpecuniary damage.” N.D. Cent. Code § 54-23.4-01(7)(a) includes in its definition of “allowable expense” “reasonable charges incurred for reasonably needed products, services, and accommodations required due to the injury, including those for medical care, rehabilitation, rehabilitative occupational training, and other remedial treatment and care.”

However, several eligibility criteria in the victim of crime compensation statutes under N.D. Cent. Code §§ 54-23.4-01 et seq. might result in the inability of a domestic minor sex trafficking victim to receive compensation for injuries suffered as a result of commercial sexual exploitation. N.D. Cent. Code § 54-23.4-06(2) (Application for compensation—Awards—Limitations on awards) limits the time period to file a claim for compensation to “one year from the date the criminally injurious conduct was reported to a law enforcement officer.” However, “The division may extend the time for filing if it determines that the interests of justice so require.” Under N.D. Cent. Code § 54-23.4-06(3), “Compensation may not be awarded to a claimant who is the offender or an accomplice of the offender, nor to any claimant if the award would unjustly benefit the offender or an accomplice.” N.D. Cent. Code § 54-23.4-06(4) requires, “In the case of child abuse or sexual molestation of a child, the criminally injurious conduct must be reported to a law enforcement officer within three years

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<sup>55</sup> See *supra* Component 1.2.

<sup>56</sup> See *supra* Component 1.2.

<sup>57</sup> N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-01(12) (Definitions) defines “victim” as “an individual who is subjected to human trafficking or to conduct that would have constituted human trafficking had this chapter been in effect when the conduct occurred, regardless of whether a perpetrator is identified, apprehended, prosecuted, or convicted.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-01(5) defines “human trafficking” as the commission of an offense created by sections 12.1-41-02 through 12.1-41-06.”

after the child reaches the age of majority.” For other crimes, compensation will not be awarded unless reported within 96 hours of the commission of the crime, unless there was good cause for failure to report. Under subsection (5), “The division, upon finding that the claimant has not fully cooperated with appropriate law enforcement agencies, may deny, reconsider, or reduce an award of compensation.” Moreover, N.D. Cent. Code § 54-23.4-06(6) states, “Compensation otherwise payable to a claimant must be reduced or denied: . . . b. To the extent the division deems reasonable because of the contributory misconduct of the claimant or of a victim on whose behalf compensation is claimed . . . .” Lastly, compensation may not exceed a total of \$25,000. N.D. Cent. Code § 54-23.4-06(8).

5.7.1 Recommendation: Amend Chapter 54-23.4 (Crime Victims Compensation) to add a specific exception to the ineligibility criteria for domestic minor sex trafficking victims.<sup>58</sup>

## 5.8 *Victim-friendly procedures and protections are provided in the trial process for minors under 18.*

Several victim-friendly criminal justice procedures and protections are provided to children. N.D. Cent. Code § 31-04-04.1(1) (Videotaped statement of a child sexual offense victim—Criteria for admission as evidence) allows “the oral statement of the child victim” to be recorded prior to trial and entered into evidence subject to certain conditions “[i]n any prosecution for a violation of section 12.1-20-03 [Gross sexual imposition], 12.1-20-03.1 [Continuous sexual abuse of a child], 12.1-20-04 [Sexual imposition], 12.1-20-05 [Corruption or solicitation of minors], 12.1-20-06 [Sexual abuse of wards], 12.1-20-07 [Sexual assault], or 12.1-20-11 [Incest] in which the victim is less than fifteen years of age . . . .” N.D. Cent. Code § 31-04-04.1(1). For this to be admitted into evidence, N.D. Cent. Code § 31-04-04.1(1) states that the following conditions must be satisfied:

- a. The court determines there is reasonable cause to believe that the child victim would experience serious emotional trauma as a result of in-court participation in the proceeding;
- b. The accused must be given reasonable written notice of the time and place for taking the videotaped statement;
- c. The accused must be afforded the opportunity to hear and view the testimony from outside the presence of the child by means of a two-way mirror or other similar method that will ensure that the child cannot hear or see the accused;
- d. The accused must have the opportunity to communicate orally with counsel by electronic means while the videotaped statement is being made; and
- e. All questioning must be done by the prosecutor or counsel for the defendant unless the defendant is an attorney pro se. An attorney pro se must conduct all questioning from outside the presence of the child. Upon request of any of the parties or upon the determination of the court that it would be appropriate, the court may appoint a person who is qualified as an expert and who has dealt with the child in a therapeutic setting to aid the court throughout proceedings conducted under this section and the court may appoint a guardian ad litem to protect the interests of the child.

Additionally, for the videotaped statement to be admitted into evidence, the court must find “that the child is unavailable as a witness to testify at trial and, upon viewing the videotape recording before it is shown to the jury, determines that it is sufficiently reliable and trustworthy and that the interests of justice will best be served by admission of the statement into evidence.” N.D. Cent. Code § 31-04-04.1(2). Under this subsection,

“[U]navailable” includes a determination, based on medical or psychological evidence or expert testimony, that the child would suffer serious emotional or psychological strain if required to testify at trial. The court, in making its findings and determinations under this subsection, shall consider at least the following:

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<sup>58</sup> The recommendation in this component is predicated on the recommendation in 5.1 being simultaneously or previously enacted.

- a. The nature of the offense;
- b. The significance of the child’s testimony to the case;
- c. The child’s age;
- d. The child’s psychological maturity and understanding; and
- e. The nature, degree, and duration of potential injury to the child from testifying.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-35-02 (Additional services) encourages state’s attorneys to provide additional services to “children who are involved in criminal proceedings as victims or witnesses.” These include the following:

1. Explanations, in language understood by the child, of all legal proceedings in which the child will be involved.
2. Advice to the court concerning the ability of a child witness to cooperate with the prosecution and the potential effects of the proceedings on the child.
3. Information about, and referrals to, appropriate social services programs to assist the child and the child’s family members in coping with the emotional impact of the crime and the subsequent proceedings in which the child is involved.
4. Information about the availability of a child development specialist to ensure questions asked of the witness are chronologically and developmentally appropriate.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-35-04 (Limits on interviews and testimony) states, “The prosecuting attorney, the court, and appropriate law enforcement personnel, to the extent possible, shall protect the victim or witness from the psychological damage of repeated or lengthy interview, testimony, or discovery proceedings while preserving the rights of the public, the victim, and the person charged with the violation.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-35-05 (Prompt disposition) states in part, “In all criminal cases and juvenile proceedings involving a child victim or witness, the court and the state’s attorney shall take appropriate action to ensure a speedy trial in order to minimize the length of time the child must endure the stress of involvement in the proceedings.”

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-16<sup>59</sup> (Appointment of a guardian ad litem in prosecution for sex offenses) allows for the appointment of a guardian ad litem “at all stages of the proceedings arising from” a violation of chapter 12.1-41 (Uniform Act on Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking). Further, pursuant to the procedures in N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-35-05.1 (Assistance during proceedings), child witnesses may be accompanied by a court selected person during proceedings for support while giving testimony.

Certain material, including identifying information, interviews, and statements, by or about child victims or child witnesses, subject to exceptions, may not appear in public record. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-35-03 (Information about child victims or witnesses of crimes generally may not appear in public record).

Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-10 (Victim confidentiality),

In an investigation of or a prosecution for an offense under this chapter [Uniform Act on Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking], a law enforcement agency and state’s attorney shall keep confidential the identity, pictures, and images of the alleged victim and the family of the alleged victim, except to the extent that disclosure is:

1. Necessary for the purpose of investigation or prosecution;
2. Required by law or court order; or
3. Necessary to ensure provision of services or benefits for the victim or the victim’s family

Additionally, pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code 12.1-35-05.2 (Confidentiality of testimony),

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<sup>59</sup> The text of N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-16 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of House Bill 1465 during the 2019 Regular Session of the 66th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota (effective August 1, 2019).



In any criminal proceeding in which the defendant is charged with a violation of chapter 12.1-20 [Sex offenses, including luring a minor and solicitation of a minor] involving a child, the court, upon the motion of the prosecuting attorney, shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the testimony of and relating to a child may be closed to the public in order to protect the child's reputation.

North Dakota Rules of Evidence 412 (commonly called the "rape shield law") protects testifying victims of sex crimes from examination leading to evidence about past or other sexual behavior. It states,

a. Evidence generally inadmissible.

The following evidence is not admissible in any criminal proceeding involving alleged sexual misconduct except as provided in subdivisions (b) and (c):

- (1) evidence offered to prove that any alleged victim engaged in other sexual behavior; and
- (2) evidence offered to prove any alleged victim's sexual predisposition.

b. Exceptions.

In a criminal case, the following evidence is admissible, if otherwise admissible under these rules:

- (1) evidence of specific instances of sexual behavior by the alleged victim offered to prove that a person other than the accused was the source of semen, injury, or other physical evidence;
- (2) evidence of specific instances of sexual behavior by the alleged victim with respect to the person accused of the sexual misconduct, offered by the accused to prove consent or by the prosecution; and
- (3) evidence the exclusion of which would violate the constitutional rights of the defendant.

....

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-11 (Past sexual behavior of victim) specifically extends rape shield protections to sex trafficking victims. It states,

In a prosecution for an offense under this chapter [Uniform Act on Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking] or a civil action under section 12.1-41-15 [Civil action], evidence of a specific instance of the alleged victim's past sexual behavior or reputation or opinion evidence of past sexual behavior of the alleged victim is not admissible unless the evidence is:

1. Admitted in accordance with the North Dakota rules of evidence; or
2. Offered by the prosecution to prove a pattern of human trafficking by the defendant.

Although public records are made accessible under N.D. Cent. Code § 44-04-18 (Access to public records), domestic violence and victim record information is exempt<sup>60</sup> pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 44-04-18.20 (Domestic violence and victim information exempt), which states,

The address, telephone number, or any identifying information that, if released, could reasonably be used to locate or identify a victim or alleged victim . . . of a sex offense under chapter 12.1-20, of sexual performances by a child under chapter 12.1-27.2, or of human trafficking under chapter 12.1-41, contained in any record maintained by a criminal justice agency as defined by section 44-04-18.7 or correctional facility as defined by 12-44.1-01 is exempt.

Lastly, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-31.2-01 (Disorderly conduct restraining order – Penalty) allows human trafficking victims to request a restraining order against their exploiters:

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<sup>60</sup> However, N.D. Cent. Code. § 27-20-51 (Inspection of court files and records) states,

To the extent necessary to provide victim services or benefits under chapter 12.1-41, the judge and staff of the juvenile court may disclose information to refer a juvenile, who may be a victim of human trafficking, to a program for runaway and homeless youth located in the state and approved by the juvenile court of jurisdiction. Information disclosed under this subsection must remain confidential.

1. “Disorderly conduct” means intrusive or unwanted acts, words, or gestures that are intended to adversely affect the safety, security, or privacy of another person. For the purposes of this section, disorderly conduct includes human trafficking or attempted human trafficking as defined in this title.<sup>61</sup> Disorderly conduct does not include constitutionally protected activity.

2. A person who is a victim of disorderly conduct or the parent or guardian of a minor who is a victim of disorderly conduct may seek a disorderly conduct restraining order from any court of competent jurisdiction in the manner provided in this section.

...

5.9 *Child sex trafficking victims may vacate delinquency adjudications and expunge related records for prostitution and other offenses arising from trafficking victimization, without a waiting period.*

North Dakota law does not provide a mechanism for minors to vacate delinquency adjudications related to trafficking victimization, and juvenile records may only be expunged after a waiting period.

Regarding expungement, N.D. Cent. Code § 27-20-54(1) (Destruction of juvenile court records) provides, “[e]xcept as otherwise required under section 25-03.3-04, all juvenile court records must be retained and disposed<sup>62</sup> of pursuant to rules and policies established by the North Dakota supreme court.” Records of juvenile delinquency adjudications are “[r]etain[ed] for 10 years after expiration of final order, or age 18, whichever is later.” Unruly juvenile records are “[r]etain[ed] for 1 year after child turns 18 or final expiration of order, whichever is later.” Deprivation records (absent termination of parental rights) are “[r]etain[ed] for 10 years after child turns 18 or final expiration of order, whichever is later.” N.D. Admin. Code 19 (2011) (Records Retention Schedule—courts: Juvenile Case Files).<sup>63</sup>

Because North Dakota law mandates a minimum 1 to 10 year waiting period, however, a child sex trafficking victim may face collateral consequences associated with having an accessible delinquency record during that time.

North Dakota law also contains N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-14<sup>64</sup> (Motion to vacate and expunge conviction), a trafficking-specific provision, which states,

(1) An individual convicted of prostitution or an offense listed in subsection 1 of section 12.1-41-12 [Immunity of a minor]<sup>65</sup> which was committed as a direct result of being a victim may apply by motion

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<sup>61</sup> Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code. § 12.1-41-01(5) (Definitions), “[h]uman trafficking” is defined as “the commission of an offense created by sections 12.1-41-02 [Trafficking an individual] through 12.1-41-06 [Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity].”

<sup>62</sup> N.D. Admin. Code 19, Sec. 5 (2011) (Disposition of Court Records),

The term “disposition” means:

- a. transfer of a record to the possession of the state archivist pursuant to the procedure in Section 10;
- b. destruction by burning or shredding, if the record is confidential; or
- c. destruction by ordinary means, such as landfill or recycling, if the record is not confidential.

*See also* North Dakota Supreme Court Rules, <http://www.ndcourts.gov/rules/Administrative/frameset.htm>. (last visited July 29, 2016)

<sup>63</sup> The retention schedule can also be found at North Dakota Supreme Court Rules, <http://www.ndcourts.gov/rules/Administrative/frameset.htm> (click on Rule 19 and then on “records retention schedule”) (last visited July 29, 2016).

<sup>64</sup> The text of N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-14 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of House Bill 1256 during the 2019 Regular Session of the 66th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota (effective August 1, 2019).

<sup>65</sup> Under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-14, eligible offenses include:

- to the court to vacate the conviction and seal the record of conviction. The court may grant the motion on a finding that the individual’s participation in the offense was a direct result of being a victim.
- (2) Official determination or documentation is not required to grant a motion by an individual under subsection 1, but an official determination or documentation from a federal, state, local, or tribal agency that the individual was a victim at the time of the offense creates a presumption that the individual’s participation was a direct result of being a victim.
- (3) A motion filed under subsection 1, any hearing conducted on the motion, and any relief granted are governed by chapter 29-32.1.

However, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-14 applies specifically to “convictions,” and N.D. Cent. Code § 27-20-33 (Order of adjudication—Noncriminal) states, “[a]n order of disposition or other adjudication in a proceeding under this chapter [Uniform Juvenile Court Act] is not a conviction of a crime . . . .” Accordingly, delinquency adjudications cannot be vacated and related records cannot be sealed under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-14. In fact, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-14 applies only to offenses for which minors have immunity, foreclosing the law’s usefulness to child sex trafficking victims.

- 5.9.1 Recommendation: Amend N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-14 (Motion to vacate and expunge conviction) to allow child sex trafficking victims to vacate delinquency adjudications and expunge related records for prostitution and other offenses arising from trafficking victimization, without a waiting period.<sup>66</sup>

*5.10 Victim restitution and civil remedies for victims of domestic minor sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) are authorized by law.*

Victim restitution is mandatory when traffickers are convicted but not buyers.<sup>67</sup> N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-09(1), (2) (Restitution) states,

1. The court shall order a person convicted of an offense under section § 12.1-41-02 (Trafficking an individual), 12.1-41-03 (Forced labor), or 12.1-41-04 (Sexual servitude) to pay restitution to the victim of the offense for:
  - a. Expenses incurred or reasonably certain to be incurred by the victim as a result of the offense, including reasonable attorney’s fees and costs; and
  - b. An amount equal to the greatest of the following, with no reduction for expenses the defendant incurred to maintain the victim:
    - (1) The gross income to the defendant for, or the value to the defendant of, the victim's labor or services or sexual activity;
    - (2) The amount the defendant contracted to pay the victim; or
    - (3) The value of the victim's labor or services or sexual activity, calculated under the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, [29 U.S.C. 201 et seq.] or

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- (a) Prostitution under section 12.1-29-03;
  - (b) Misdemeanor forgery under section 12.1-24-01;
  - (c) Misdemeanor theft offenses under chapter 12.1-23;
  - (d) Insufficient funds or credit offenses under section 6-08-16;
  - (e) Manufacture or possession of a controlled substance or counterfeit substance offenses under section 19-03.1-23; and
  - (f) Drug paraphernalia offenses under chapter 19-03.4.

<sup>66</sup> The recommendation in this component is predicated upon the recommendation in 5.1 being simultaneously or previously enacted.

<sup>67</sup> The analysis in this component is predicated on the recommendation in 5.1 being simultaneously or previously enacted.

section 34-06-22, whichever is higher, even if the provisions do not apply to the victim's labor or services or sexual activity.

2. The court shall order restitution under subsection 1 even if the victim is unavailable to accept payment of restitution.

According to N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-09(3), if the victim does not claim restitution ordered under subsection 1 for five years after entry of order, the restitution must be paid to the crime victims restitution and gift fund under section 54-23.4-05.<sup>68</sup>

Unclaimed restitution, as well as forfeited assets directed into the attorney general assets forfeiture fund must be used to fund services to the extent the funds were related to human trafficking. N.D. Cent. Code § 54-12-14 (Assets forfeiture fund - Created - Purpose - Continuing appropriation) states,

1. The attorney general assets forfeiture fund consists of funds appropriated by the legislative assembly and additional funds obtained from moneys, assets, and proceeds seized and forfeited pursuant to section 19-03.1-36, amounts received through court proceedings as restitution, amounts remaining from the forfeiture of property after the payment of expenses for forfeiture and sale authorized by law, and amounts received from a multijurisdictional drug task force as defined in section 54-12-26 . . . .

. . . .

3. Notwithstanding subsection 1, the amount of deposits into the fund related to human trafficking are appropriated, as a standing and continuing appropriation, to the attorney general for awarding grants to organizations providing prevention and treatment services for human trafficking victims.

Restitution is also available under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08 (Hearing prior to ordering restitution, reparation, or reimbursement of indigent defense costs and expenses—Conditions—Collection of restitution for insufficient funds checks—Continuing appropriation), which provides for mandatory restitution only where the victim suffered pecuniary damages. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08(1)<sup>69</sup> states in part,

Before imposing restitution or reparation as a sentence or condition of probation, the court shall hold a hearing on the matter with notice to the prosecuting attorney and to the defendant as to the nature and amount of restitution. The court, when sentencing a person adjudged guilty of criminal activities that have resulted in pecuniary damages, in addition to any other sentence the court may impose, shall order that the defendant make restitution to the victim or other recipient as determined by the court . . . .

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-32-08(1) also sets forth items the court is to consider “[i]n determining whether to order restitution . . . .” One of those items, subsection (1)(a), states that “[t]he defendant may be required as part of the sentence imposed by the court to pay the prescribed treatment costs for a victim of a sexual offense as defined in chapters 12.1-20 [Sex offenses] and 12.1-27.2 [Sexual performances by children].”

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<sup>68</sup> Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 54-23.4-05 (Restitution funds, gifts, grants, and bequests - Restitution and gift fund),

The division may accept on behalf of the state all restitution funds, gifts, grants, or bequests of property tendered to the state for any purpose pertaining to the activities of the division in implementing this chapter. The crime victims restitution and gift fund is established as a special fund in the state treasury. All restitution funds, gifts, grants, and bequests of property or money, and any interest occurring thereon, must be placed in the crime victims restitution and gift fund. Subject to legislative appropriation, the fund may be used and disbursed by the division in accordance with the terms of the payment or donation or, if there are no terms, for costs and expenses incurred by the division in the implementation of this chapter.

<sup>69</sup> See *supra* note 15.

Under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-15 (Civil action), “[a] victim may bring a civil action against a person that commits an offense against the victim under section 12.1-41-02 (Trafficking an individual), 12.1-41-03 (Forced labor), or 12.1-41-04 (Sexual servitude) for compensatory damages, exemplary or punitive damages, injunctive relief, and any other appropriate relief . . . . An action under this section must be commenced not later than ten years after the later of the date on which the victim: a. No longer was subject to human trafficking; or b. Attained eighteen years of age. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-15(1), (3).

A domestic minor sex trafficking victim may avail herself of civil remedies if the victim is also a victim of a racketeering offense. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-06.1-05(1) (Racketeering—Civil remedies) provides that

[a] person who sustains injury to person, business, or property by a pattern of racketeering activity or by a violation of section 12.1-06.1-02 [Leading a criminal association] or 12.1-06.1-03 [Illegal control of an enterprise] may file an action in district court for the recovery of treble damages and the costs of the suit, including reasonable attorney fees. The state may file an action in behalf of those persons injured or to prevent, restrain, or remedy a pattern of racketeering activity or a violation of section 12.1-06.1-02 or 12.1-06.1-03.

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-06.1-05(4) states,

Following a determination of liability, orders may include:

. . . .

d. Ordering the payment of treble damages and appropriate restitution to those persons injured by a pattern of racketeering activity or a violation of section 12.1-06.1-02 or 12.1-06.1-03.

e. Ordering the payment of all costs and expenses and reasonable attorneys’ fees concerned with the prosecution and investigation of any offense included in the definition of racketeering if upon application for the order it is shown to the satisfaction of the court that the racketeering offense has occurred as a part of a pattern of racketeering activity or a violation of section 12.1-06.1-02 or 12.1-06.1-03, civil and criminal, incurred by the state or county as appropriate to be paid to the general fund of the state or county that brings the action.

*5.11 Statutes of limitations for civil and criminal actions for child sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) offenses are eliminated or lengthened to allow prosecutors and victims a realistic opportunity to pursue criminal action and legal remedies.*

N.D. Cent. Code § 29-04-02 (Prosecution for felony other than murder within three years) provides a three-year statute of limitations for prosecution of felonies (other than murder). However, N.D. Cent. Code § 29-04-03.1 (1)<sup>70</sup> (Prosecution for sexual abuse of minors) lengthens this in certain cases, as follows:

Except as provided in subsection 2, a prosecution for a violation of sections 12.1-20-03 through 12.1-20-08 [Continuous sexual abuse, sexual imposition, corruption or solicitation of minors, luring, sexual assault, fornication] or of section 12.1-20-11 [Incest] if the victim was under eighteen years of age at the time the offense was committed must be commenced in the proper court within twenty-one years after the commission of the offense or, if the victim failed to report the offense within this limitation period, within three years after the offense was reported to law enforcement authorities.

N.D. Cent. Code § 29-04-02.1 (Prosecution for gross sexual imposition) provides a seven year statute of limitations for prosecution of N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-03(1)(a) (Gross sexual imposition) or for the crime of human trafficking. In addition, N.D. Cent. Code § 29-04-03 (Prosecution for misdemeanor or infraction within

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<sup>70</sup> The text of N.D. Cent. Code § 29-04-03.1 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of House Bill 1425 during the 2019 Regular Session of the 66th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota (effective August 1, 2019).

two years) provides that prosecution of a misdemeanor or infraction must be commenced within two years after the commission of the misdemeanor or infraction.

For victims of sex offenses under chapter 12.1-20 or of the crime of human trafficking who are under 15, “the applicable period of limitation, if any, does not begin to run until the victim has reached the age of fifteen.” N.D. Cent. Code § 29-04-03.2 (Statute of limitations as to child victims).

Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 28-01-16 (Actions having six-year limitations), “The following actions must be commenced within six years after the claim for relief has accrued: . . . An action upon a liability created by statute, other than a penalty or forfeiture, when not otherwise expressly provided . . . An action for criminal conversation or for any other injury to the person or rights of another not arising upon contract, when not otherwise expressly provided . . .” Under N.D. Cent. Code § 28-01-25 (Disabilities extend limitations on actions generally—Exceptions),

If a person who is entitled to bring an action other than for the recovery of real property, or for a penalty or forfeiture, or against a sheriff or other officer for an escape is: 1. Under the age of eighteen years; . . . at the time the claim for relief accrues, the time of such disability is not a part of the time limited for the commencement of the action. However, the period within which the action must be brought cannot be extended more than five years by any such disability except infancy, nor can it be extended in any case longer than one year after the disability ceases. In cases alleging professional malpractice, the extension of the limitation due to infancy is limited to twelve years.

However, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-15 (Civil action) states, “[a] victim may bring a civil action against a person that commits an offense against the victim under section 12.1-41-02 [Trafficking an individual], 12.1-41-03 [Forced labor], or 12.1-41-04 [Sexual servitude] for compensatory damages, exemplary or punitive damages, injunctive relief, and any other appropriate relief . . . . An action under this section must be commenced not later than ten years after the later of the date on which the victim: a. No longer was subject to human trafficking; or b. Attained eighteen years of age.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-15(1), (3).

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-06.1-05(7) (Racketeering—Civil Remedies) specifies that “[n]otwithstanding any law to the contrary, the initiation of civil proceedings related to violations of any offense included in the definition of racketeering or a violation of section 12.1-06.1-02 or 12.1-06.1-03 (Illegal control of an enterprise—Illegally conducting an enterprise) must be commenced within seven years of actual discovery of the violation.” Therefore, any statute of limitations for a civil claim brought under the racketeering provisions will not be tolled until the minor reaches the age of 18.

**Legal Components:**

- 6.1 *Training on human trafficking and domestic minor sex trafficking for law enforcement is statutorily mandated or authorized.*
- 6.2 *Single party consent to audiotaping is permitted in law enforcement investigations.*
- 6.3 *Wiretapping is an available tool to investigate domestic minor sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).*
- 6.4 *Using a law enforcement decoy to investigate buying or selling commercial sex is not a defense to soliciting, purchasing, or selling sex with a minor.*
- 6.5 *Using the Internet or electronic communications to investigate buyers and traffickers using the Internet is a permissible investigative technique.*
- 6.6 *State law requires reporting of missing children and located missing children.*

**Legal Analysis:**

- 6.1 *Training on human trafficking and domestic minor sex trafficking for law enforcement is statutorily mandated or authorized.*

To “ensure adequate training for law enforcement and to ensure the comprehensive collection of crime statistics,” the attorney general is responsible for, among other things, “[d]etermin[ing] the specialized training needs of peace officers and conduct[ing] such training.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12-62-02(1) (Powers and duties). Training on human trafficking could be developed through the attorney general’s office. N.D. Cent. Code, § 12-62-01 (Criminal justice training and statistics—Personnel—Purpose) states, “Criminal justice training and the collection of statistics must be conducted by the office of attorney general. The office of attorney general shall conduct the training of peace officers and sheriffs and gather, analyze, and disseminate information regarding the state's criminal justice system.” Information on human trafficking could be presented in training materials concerning missing persons. Under N.D. Cent. Code § 12-68-05 (Attorney general to develop missing person procedural policy), the attorney general is directed to “develop a procedures manual . . . relating to the investigation of missing person cases” and “distribute the manual to law enforcement agencies.”

While not mandatory, N.D. Cent. Code § 54-12-33(1) (Human trafficking commission) authorizes the attorney general to “establish a human trafficking commission, comprised of designees from state, local, and tribal agencies which have contact with victims or perpetrators.” Pursuant to N.D. Cent. Code § 54-12-33(2),<sup>71</sup>

The commission shall:

. . . .

- c. Promote training on human trafficking prevention and victim services for state and local employees who may have recurring contact with victims or perpetrators;<sup>72</sup>
- d. Promote training on human trafficking investigation and prosecution . . . with the North Dakota state's attorney's association, the North Dakota peace officers standards and training board, and state and local law enforcement agencies . . . .

<sup>71</sup> The text of N.D. Cent. Code § 54-12-33 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of House Bill 1311 during the 2019 Regular Session of the 66th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota (effective July 1, 2019).

<sup>72</sup> N.D. Cent. Code § 50-25.1-19(2) (Child protective services duties—Training requirements) requires the department of human services to “provide training to all representatives of the child protective services system regarding the legal duties of the representatives . . . to protect the legal rights and safety of children and families from the initial time of contact during assessment through treatment.”

....

6.2 *Single party consent to audiotaping is permitted in law enforcement investigations.*

Single party consent to audiotaping is permitted. Under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-15-02(3)(c) (Interception of wire or oral communications—Eavesdropping),

It is a defense to a prosecution under subsection 1 [crime of interception] that:

....

- c. (1) The actor was a party to the communication or one of the parties to the communication had given prior consent to such interception, and
- (2) such communication was not intercepted for the purpose of committing a crime or other unlawful harm.

6.3 *Wiretapping is an available tool to investigate domestic minor sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).*

Under N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-15-02 (Interception of wire or oral communications – Eavesdropping), interception of wire or oral communications is permitted in certain scenarios. It is a Class C felony to “a. Intentionally intercept[] any wire or oral communication by use of any electronic, mechanical, or other device; or b. Intentionally disclose[] to any other person or intentionally use[] the contents of any wire or oral communication, knowing that the information was obtained through the interception of a wire or oral communication” and a Class A misdemeanor to “secretly loiter[] about any building with intent to overhear discourse or conversation therein and to repeat or publish the same with intent to vex, annoy, or injure others.” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-15-02(1)–(2). N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-15-02 provides a defense to prosecution under subsection (3) if,

- a. The actor was authorized by law to intercept, disclose, or use, as the case may be, the wire or oral communication;
- b. The actor was
  - (1) a person acting under color of law to intercept a wire or oral communication, and
  - (2) he was a party to the communication or one of the parties to the communication had given prior consent to such interception
- c. (1) The actor was a party to the communication or one of the parties to the communication had given prior consent to such interception, and
- (2) such communication was not intercepted for the purpose of committing a crime or other unlawful harm.

6.3.1 Recommendation: Amend N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-15-02 (Interception of wire or oral communications – Eavesdropping) to expressly permit interception of wire or oral communications in trafficking or CSEC investigations.



6.4 *Using a law enforcement decoy to investigate buying or selling commercial sex is not a defense to soliciting, purchasing, or selling sex with a minor.*

North Dakota’s trafficking and CSEC laws do not expressly prohibit a defense to prosecution based on the use of a law enforcement decoy posing as a minor to investigate these crimes. N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-04 (Sexual servitude) requires the defendant to “[m]aintain[] or make[] available a minor . . . .” N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-41-06 (Patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity) requires the defendant to give anything of value “to a minor or another person so that the individual may engage in commercial sexual activity with a minor.” Further, N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-29-02(1) (Facilitating prostitution) requires that the victim be “in fact, less than sixteen years old.” Consequently, law enforcement decoys may not be used to investigate these offenses through reverse sting operations.

- 6.4.1 Recommendation: Enact a law specifically prohibit a defense to prosecution based on the use of a law enforcement decoy posing as a minor to investigate domestic minor sex trafficking. Alternatively, amend each of the CSEC laws and the human trafficking law to prohibit a defense to prosecution based on the victim actually being law enforcement or an agent of law enforcement.

6.5 *Using the Internet or electronic communications to investigate buyers and traffickers using the Internet is a permissible investigative technique.*

N.D. Cent. Code § 12.1-20-05.1(1) (Luring minors by computer or other electronic means) states,

An adult is guilty of luring minors by computer or other electronic means when:

- a. The adult knows the character and content of a communication that, in whole or in part, implicitly or explicitly discusses or depicts actual or simulated nudity, sexual acts, sexual contact, sadomasochistic abuse, or other sexual performances and uses any computer communication system or other electronic means that allows the input, output, examination, or transfer of data or programs from one computer or electronic device to another to initiate or engage in such communication with a person the adult believes to be a minor; and
- b. By means of that communication the adult importunes, invites, or induces a person the adult believes to be a minor to engage in sexual acts or to have sexual contact with the adult, or to engage in a sexual performance, obscene sexual performance, or sexual conduct for the adult's benefit, satisfaction, lust, passions, or sexual desires.

Because it is not required that the “minor” actually be a person under 18, it appears possible to use the Internet to investigate an offender of luring for commercial sexual exploitation by an adult law enforcement officer whom the accused believes is a minor.

6.6 *State law requires reporting of missing children and located missing children.*

N.D. Cent. Code § 12-60-25 (Lost, missing, or runaway children) requires a statewide reporting and response system for lost, missing or runaway children. The statute requires the Bureau of Criminal Investigations to implement a system in conjunction with the national crime information center that allows information regarding lost, missing, or runaway children to be shared with North Dakota law enforcement agencies as well as out-of-state law enforcement agencies. N.D. Cent. Code § 12-60-25(1). The bureau must also coordinate with law enforcement agencies regarding reports of lost, missing, or runaway children in order to properly notify the national crime information center. N.D. Cent. Code § 12-60-25(3). The bureau must also permit reports to be made by parents, guardians, or relatives regarding lost, missing, or runaway children. N.D. Cent. Code § 12-60-25(6). The law enforcement agency that filed the report will be responsible for maintaining the disposition of the case, and the bureau must compile and maintain these records. N.D. Cent. Code § 12-60-25(4), (7).

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