

PROTECTED INNOCENCE CHALLENGE

STATE ACTION. NATIONAL CHANGE.

Issue Brief

SECTION 5.4

Area of Law

Protective Provisions for the Child Victims

The Policy Point

Child victims of sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation are provided with a child protection response, including specialized shelter and services, and are not detained in juvenile detention facilities.

The Legislative Solution

Establishing a child protection response is critical to ending the arrest and detention of domestic minor sex trafficking victims and ensuring instead that they are provided crime victim protections, services, and benefits. These victims come to the attention of service providers in various venues and under a variety of circumstances. Without clear statutory mechanisms for ensuring prompt identification of victims followed by appropriate placement and provision of specialized services for sexually exploited youth, victims could face either a punitive response through the criminal justice system that fails to connect them with needed services, or an inadequate child protection response that may allow victims to return to their trafficker or to the conditions which led to their trafficking. A specialized protective response addresses both of these concerns by establishing a process that identifies child sex trafficking victims and directs them into multidisciplinary services and residential placement options that are designed to work in conjunction to break the trauma bond and concomitant cycle of victims returning to their traffickers. Specialized services for child sex trafficking victims should include protective shelters, physical and mental health care, education, and recovery programs. Services should be delivered by trained trauma responders and health care providers. Laws are required to establish and financially support these programs and to treat domestic minor sex trafficking victims at all stages from intervention to restoration.

Select Statute Highlights

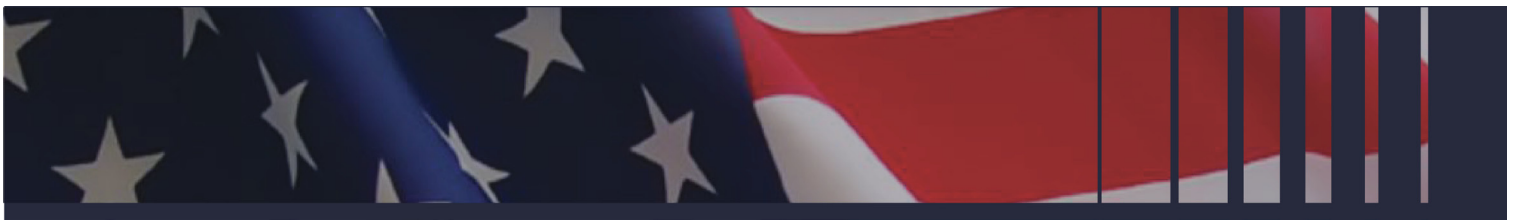
The following statutes establish non-punitive, protective processes that identify victims and direct them into multidisciplinary services and residential placement options through a variety of mechanisms, including specific child protective designations that provide an alternative to a punitive response which is separate from or in addition to abuse, neglect, or dependency proceedings.

Florida

Pursuant to Fla. Stat. Ann. § 39.01(15)(g), “Child who is found to be dependent’ means a child who, pursuant to this chapter, is found by the court . . . [t]o have been sexually exploited and to have no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative currently known and capable of providing the necessary and appropriate supervision and care.” Pursuant to Fla. Stat. Ann. § 39.01(67)(g) provides that “sexual abuse of a child for purposes of finding a child to be dependent means one or more of the following acts . . . The sexual exploitation of a child, which includes the act of a child offering to engage in or engaging in prostitution, provided that the child is not under arrest or is not being prosecuted in a delinquency

or criminal proceeding for a violation of any offense in chapter 796 based on such behavior; or allowing, encouraging, or forcing a child to: 1. Solicit for or engage in prostitution; or 2. Engage in a sexual performance, as defined by chapter 827; or 3. Participate in the trade of sex trafficking as provided in s. 796.035 [Buying and selling minors into prostitution].

Under Fla. Stat. Ann. § 39.401(2)(b), when there is probable cause that a child taken into custody and alleged to be dependent has been sexually exploited, “the law enforcement officer shall deliver the child to the department [of Children and Family Services]. The department may place the child in an appropriate short term safe house.” Similarly, pursuant to Fla. Stat. Ann. § 39.401(3), a sexually exploited child may be placed in a short term safe house pending adjudication as a dependent child, and if a child adjudicated dependent is found to be a victim of sexual exploitation, § 39.524 (Safe harbor placement) provides that the child must be assessed for placement in a safe house. Fla. Stat. Ann. § 409.1678(1)(b) (Safe harbor for children who are victims of sexual exploitation) requires that safe houses are secure with staff awake 24 hours a day and some staff or contract personnel specially trained to work with sexually exploited youth. Short-term safe houses must also provide food,



clothing, medical care, counseling, and crisis intervention services. Fla. Stat. Ann. § 409.1678(1)(e). Under Fla. Stat. Ann. § 985.115 (2)(b), if a DMST victim is arrested for a delinquent act, law enforcement has the option of releasing the minor to a safe house as follows: “Unless otherwise ordered by the court . . . a person taking a child into custody shall attempt to release the child . . . to a shelter approved by the department or to an authorized agent or short-term safe house under s. 39.401(2)(b).” Pursuant to Fla. Stat. Ann. § 409.1678(2)(e) (Safe harbor for children who are victims of sexual exploitation), “All of the services in this section may . . . be available to all sexually exploited children whether they are accessed voluntarily, as a condition of probation, through a diversion program, through a [dependency] proceeding . . . or through a referral from a local community-based care or social service agency.”

Illinois

Protective responses are provided to commercially sexually exploited children who are taken into custody for prostitution offenses. 720 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/11-14(d) (Prostitution) provides that “if it is determined, after a reasonable detention for investigative purposes, that a person suspected of or charged with a violation of this Section is a person under the age of 18, that person . . . shall be subject to temporary protective custody . . .” The detaining officer also must “report an allegation of a violation of Section 10-9 of this code [Trafficking in persons, involuntary servitude, and related offenses] . . . to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services State Central Register, which shall commence an initial investigation into child abuse or child neglect within 24 hours pursuant to Section 7.4 of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act [325 ILCS 5/7.4 et seq.]” Temporary protective custody is defined as, “temporary placement of the minor out of the custody of his or her guardian or parent, and includes the following: (1) . . . within a hospital or other medical facility or a place previously designated for such custody by the Department of Children and Family Services, subject to review by the court, including a licensed foster home, group home, or other institution. However, such place shall not be a jail or other place for the detention of the criminal or juvenile offenders, (2) “Shelter care” means a physically unrestrictive facility designated by the Department of Children and Family Services or a licensed child welfare agency, or other suitable place designated by the court for a minor who requires care away from his or her home.” 705 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 405/2-7.

Illinois’ Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, 325 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/3(h) (Definitions), defines “abused child” as a “child whose parent or immediate family member, or any person responsible for the child’s welfare, or any individual residing in the same home as the child, or a paramour of the child’s parent: . . . commits or allows to be committed the offense of involuntary servitude, involuntary sexual servitude of a minor, or trafficking in persons for forced labor or services as defined in Section 10-9 Criminal Code of 1961 against the child.” 325 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/5 (Temporary protective custody) states, “An officer of a local law enforcement agency, designated employee of the Department, or a physician treating a child may take or retain temporary protective custody of the child without the consent of the person responsible for the child’s welfare, if (1) he has reason to believe that the child cannot be cared for at home or in the custody of the person responsible for the child’s welfare without endangering the child’s health or safety; and (2) there is not time to apply for a court order under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 for temporary custody of the child. . . .”

Massachusetts

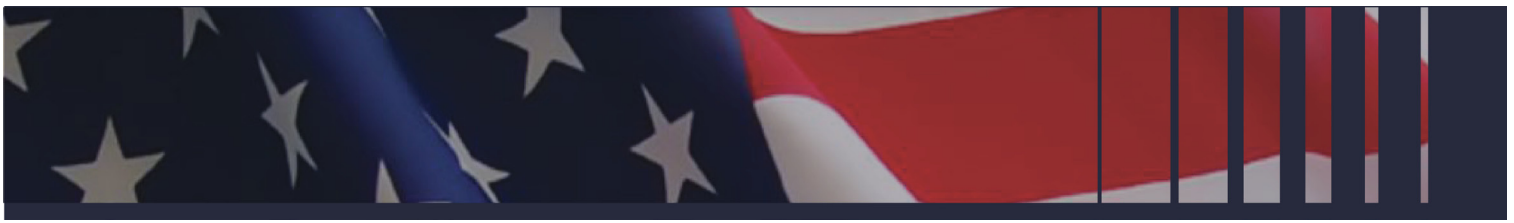
Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 119 § 21 defines “child in need of services” in part, as “a child between the ages of 6 and 17 who . . . is a sexually exploited child.” Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 119 § 21 defines a “sexually exploited child” as “any person under the age of 18 who has been subjected to sexual exploitation because such person: (1) is the victim of the crime of sexual servitude pursuant to section 50 of chapter 265 or is the victim of the crime of sex trafficking as defined in 22 United States Code 7105; (2) engages, agrees to engage or offers to engage in sexual conduct with another person in return for a fee, in violation of subsection (a) of section 53A of chapter 272, or in exchange for food, shelter, clothing, education or care; (3) is a victim of the crime, whether or not prosecuted, of inducing a minor into prostitution under by section 4A of chapter 272; or (4) engages in common night walking or common streetwalking under section 53 of chapter 272.”

Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 119 § 39K(a)–(c) (Sexually exploited children – child welfare services) states, “(a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the department of children and families, in collaboration with the department of mental health and other appropriate state agencies, shall: (i) provide for the child welfare services needs of sexually exploited children including, but not lim-

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ited to, services for sexually-exploited children residing in the commonwealth at the time they are taken into custody by law enforcement or are identified by the department as sexually-exploited children, for the duration of any legal or administrative proceeding in which they are either the complaining witness, defendant or the subject child; and (ii) provide appropriate services to a child reasonably believed to be a sexually exploited child in order to safeguard the child's welfare. If a child reasonably believed to be a sexually exploited child declines services or is unable or unwilling to participate in the services offered, the department or any person may file a care and protection petition under section 24. Sexually exploited children shall have access to an advocate. The advocate or a member of the multidisciplinary service team established under section 51D shall accompany the child to all court appearances and may serve as a liaison between the service providers and the court. (b) The services that shall be provided under this section shall be available to all sexually exploited children, whether they are accessed voluntarily, through a court proceeding under this section or through a referral, which may be made by any person. (c) In determining the need for and capacity of the services that may be provided under this section, the department of children and families shall recognize that sexually exploited youth have separate and distinct service needs according to gender and appropriate services shall be made available while ensuring that an appropriate continuum of services exists."

Minnesota

After August 1, 2014, a child whose conduct would violate Minn. Stat. Ann. § 609.324, subd. 2, 3 (Patrons; Prostitutes; Housing Individuals engaged in prostitution; Penalties) or § 609.3243 (Loitering with intent to participate in prostitution) if the child were an adult will not be considered a delinquent child as the definition of a "delinquent child" is amended to "not include a child under the age of 16 years of age alleged to have engaged in conduct which would, if committed by an adult, violate any federal, state, or local law relating to being hired, offering to be hired, or agreeing to be hired by another individual to engage in sexual penetration or sexual conduct." Minn. Stat. Ann. § 260B.007, subd. 6(c). Likewise, recently enacted Minn. Stat. Ann. § 260B.007, subd. 16(d) (Juvenile petty offender; juvenile petty offense), also effective August 1, 2014, clarifies that a "juvenile petty offense" will not include: "a child under the age of 16 years alleged to have violated any law relating to being hired, offering to be hired, or agreeing to be hired by another individual to engage in sexual penetra-

tion or sexual conduct which, if committed by an adult, would be a misdemeanor." These provisions effectively make it impossible for minors under 16 years of age to be treated as delinquent children for engaging in commercial sex acts. Instead they will be treated as a child in need of protection or services. Under other provisions of the same law, "child in need of protection or services" was amended to include "sexually exploited youth." Minn. Stat. Ann. § 260C.007, subd. 6(17).

New York

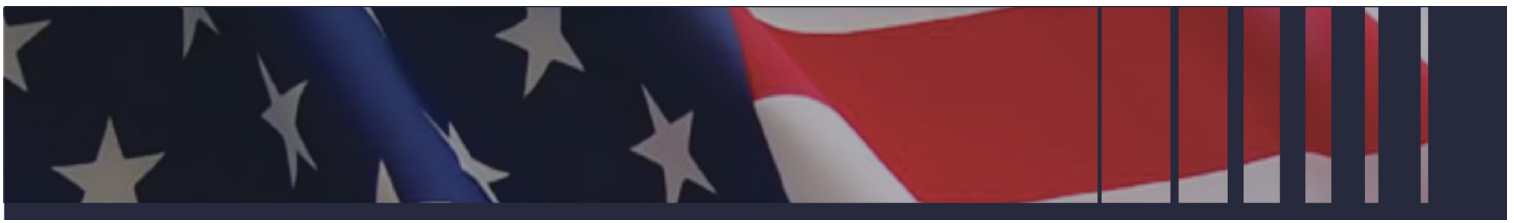
Under the Safe Harbour Act, sexually exploited children can be placed in a "short-term safe house" or "safe house" both of which are defined in part as "a residential facility operated by an authorized agency . . . including a residential facility operating as part of an approved runaway program . . . or a not-for-profit agency with experience in providing services to sexually exploited youth and approved in accordance with the regulations of the office of children and family services that provides shelter, services and care to sexually exploited children . . ." N.Y. Soc. Serv. Law § 447-a(2), (4). Also in both short term and long term safe housing sexually exploited children will receive services "including food, shelter, clothing, medical care, counseling, crisis intervention" and for long term housing, services will either be provided through "direct provision of services, or through written agreements with other community and public agencies . . ." N.Y. Soc. Serv. Law § 447-a(2),(4).

Pursuant to N.Y. Fam. Ct. Act § 739(a) (Release or detention after filing of petition and prior to order of disposition), upon an initial appearance at a juvenile delinquency proceeding, if the child is a sexually exploited child, "the court may direct the respondent to an available short-term safe house as an alternative to detention." Moreover, N.Y. Fam. Ct. Act §739(a) notes "the court shall not direct detention [of a sexually exploited minor] unless it finds and states the facts and reasons for so finding that unless the respondent is detained there is a substantial probability that the respondent will not appear in court on the return date and all available alternatives to detention have been exhausted." If the victim is unwilling "to cooperate with specialized services for sexually exploited youth" or has a prior prostitution conviction, the minor will be subject to the delinquency proceedings and could be detained. N.Y. Fam. Ct. Act § 311.4(3).

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Ohio

Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 2152.021(F) allows the court to hold a complaint of delinquency in abeyance for a child to complete the terms of a diversion program if the complaint alleges prostitution-related offenses or the court has reason to believe the child is a victim of trafficking, regardless of whether any person has been charged or convicted in connection with the child's victimization. If either ground applies, the court must appoint a guardian ad litem for the child who will make recommendations to the court. The court may hold the complaint in abeyance for up to 90 days and order placement and services, including engagement in trauma-based behavioral health services. After the initial 90-day period, the court has discretion to hold the complaint in abeyance for 2 additional 90-day periods. If diversion is successful, the complaint is dismissed and the record is immediately expunged.

Vermont

Vt. Stat. Ann. tit.13, § 2652(e) (Human trafficking) states, "If a person who is a victim of human trafficking is under 18 years of age at the time of the offense, the state may treat the person as the subject of a child in need of care or supervision [CHINS] proceeding." Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 33, § 5301 (Taking into custody) allows law enforcement to take a CHINS into custody "(1) Pursuant to an order of the family division of the superior court under the provisions of this chapter, (2) By an officer when the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the child is in immediate danger from his or her surroundings and that removal from the child's current home is necessary for the child's protection, (3) By an officer when the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the child has run away from a custodial parent, a foster parent, a guardian, a custodian, a noncustodial parent lawfully exercising parent-child contact, or care provider."

Washington

Wash. Rev. Code § 13.32A.030(5)(d) (Definitions—Regulating leave from semi secure facility) defines "child in need of services" (CHINS) as a juvenile who is "sexually exploited." A "sexually exploited child" is defined as "any person under the age of eighteen who is a victim of the crime of commercial sex abuse of a minor under RCW 9.68A.100, promoting commercial sexual of a minor under RCW 9.68A.100, promoting commercial sexual abuse of a minor under RCW 9.68A.101,

or promoting travel for commercial sexual abuse of a minor under RCW 9.68A.102." Wash. Rev. Code § 13.32A.030(17). A sexually exploited child may be "(1) . . . taken into custody and taken to a crisis residential center established pursuant to RCW 74.13.032 [Crisis residential centers—Establishment—Staff—Duties—Semi-secure facilities—Secure facilities] or may, if the center is unable to provide appropriate treatment, supervision, and structure to the child, be taken at department expense to another crisis residential center, the nearest regional secure crisis residential center, or a secure facility with which it is collocated under RCW 74.13.032. Placement in both locations shall not exceed fifteen consecutive days from the point of intake as provided in RCW 13.32A.130." Wash. Rev. Code. § 74.15.255 (Licenses for secure or semi-secure crisis residential centers or HOPE centers—Requirement—Access to person trained to work with needs of sexually exploited children) requires each crisis residential center to have a staff member, or "access to a person, who has been trained to work with the needs of sexually exploited children." Wash. Rev. Code § 74.13.034.

Wash. Rev. Code § 13.32A.179(2) (Out-of-home placement — Disposition hearing — Court order—Dispositional plan—Child subject to contempt proceedings—Dismissal of order at request of department or parent) provides that at a post disposition hearing, "the court may: . . . (d) order an out-of-home placement at the request of the child or the department not to exceed ninety days. (3) The court may only enter an order under subsection (2)(d) of this section if it finds by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that: . . . (b)(i) the order is in the best interest of the child; and (ii) the parents are unavailable; or (c) the parent's actions cause an imminent threat to the child's health or safety." Wash. Rev. Code §13.32A.180(2) states in part: "[n]o placement made pursuant to this section may be in a secure residence as defined by the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974."

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