Former congresswoman challenging Arizona laws on youth prostitution
by Jim Cross/KTAR.com [August 31st, 2011 @ 3:14pm]

PHOENIX – A former Washington state congresswoman thinks child sex trafficking is far more prevalent in Arizona than most believe.

Linda Smith with Shared Hope International says the public’s mindset about this crisis needs to change.

“I have not found, in 12 years of working on this and here over the last two or three years, a child or a woman that willing said ‘send me, I want to be a prostitute,’” she said.

Smith feels Arizona needs to toughen up the laws against men who go after these young girls.

Girls as young as the age of nine can be lured into the world of prostitution and have a difficult time getting out.

One example was of a young girl who was told to do this for the safety of her younger sister. She was being stalked at a coffee house.

“Three little brothers and sisters, an 11 dad and a mom who worked double shifts,” Smith said. "This 12 year old was caring for the kids. They got her and for 18 months they were selling her with this over her head."

The penalty ranges quite a bit depending on the age of the girl.

If they are under the age of 15 one could spend up to 21 years in prison while if they are older than 15 the punishment is up to 180 days.

“That is putting them up for sale,” Smith says. “They are for rent without much penalty in Arizona.”

The average age of a teenage prostitute is 13 according to Smith.

---

**Last 4 Comments**

**Really?**

Arizona Native

I thought our biggest, prominent and priority issue here here from illegal is. You mean that there is child sex crimes happening in the dusky areas of truck stops and unincorporated areas in this county?  

---------

**Solitaire**

Also the internet.

**You Need To Wake Up...Trache**

Solitaire

Try the downtown area, truck stops and VanBuren. It is prevalent in most cities.

**Where did this come from?**

trache

Where did this come from? Maybe it’s not as well known around here because the concept came with her from wherever she’s from?

---

Read More Comments