# Kids Are Not For  Sale in Virginia

**HB 1964, Chief Bill Patron: Delegate Timothy Hugo**
**SB 1188, Chief Bill Patron: Senator Mark Obenshain**

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## Policy Facts

- According to the U.S. Department of Justice, human trafficking is the second fastest growing crime in the U.s.
- Prior to the enactment of HB 1964 and SB 1188, Virginia was the only state in the nation without a human trafficking law.
- Without a sex trafficking law, Virginia prosecutors had to rely on substitute laws and makeshift strategies that failed to reach the offenses trafficking laws are intended to criminalize, thereby preventing victims from being properly identified and failing to prevent their victimization in the first place.
- In the absence of laws that adequately address sex trafficking, Virginia prosecutors and law enforcement lacked tools to effectively deter this crime, leaving victims without critical protections.

## Enacted Companion Bills HB 1964 and SB 1188

Enacted HB 1964 and SB 1188 establish a sex trafficking statute to address key gaps in Virginia's response to sex trafficking.  This legislation will serve as a vital tool for Virginia prosecutors, law enforcement, and service providers to fight against sex trafficking in Virginia, ensuring better protection of vulnerable victims, especially children.

This legislation:

- Defines and establishes the offense of sex trafficking and specifically criminalizes child sex trafficking.
- Eliminates the requirement to prove force, fraud, or coercion when the victim is a minor.
- Closes a loophole in Virginia's existing laws by criminalizing the recruitment of children and adults for commercial sex—conduct which was not criminalized in Virginia.
- Establishes substantial penalties for sex trafficking that reflect the seriousness of the offense.
- Assists law enforcement and prosecutors in properly identifying human trafficking victims.
- Sends traffickers and facilitators the message that they are not welcome in our state.

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