

Indiana Legislation Would Close Sex-Trafficking Loopholes

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Abstinence Educator Bruce E. Smith

The following feature story has been written by abstinence educator Bruce Smith, a lay minister for Lovin' Life Ministries in Indianapolis, Indiana. Smith, who organized a day-long conference titled Stopping the Porn Culture last December, is now encouraging residents of Indiana to get involved in the human-/sex trafficking issues of the state.



Former NFL football star Lawrence Taylor, center, is escorted from the Rockland County Courthouse on Thursday, Jan. 13, 2011, in New City, N.Y., after he pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges of sexual misconduct and patronizing a prostitute. The 51-year-old ex-linebacker will get no jail time following his plea Thursday. He is required to register as a sex offender. (AP Photo/Craig Ruttle)

On January 5, 2012, I did something I've never done. I attended an Indiana State Senate committee meeting. The committee was discussing Senate Bill 4, authored and introduced by Senator Randy Head. The purpose of the bill is to close loopholes in current laws related to human trafficking. The bill will do three things. First, it will make sex trafficking of a minor (16 years and under) a Class A felony regardless of whether or not the trafficker was the minor's parent or guardian. Secondly, the bill expands what can be prosecuted as human trafficking to include sexual conduct (forced dancing, stripping, etc.), in addition to prostitution. Third, the bill removes the necessity to prove force in sex trafficking cases involving victims who are 16 and under.

The Indiana Attorney General's office and the Marion County Prosecutor's office, as well as several representatives from local nonprofits and area churches attended the committee meeting in support of the

proposed legislation. All the senators present voted to pass the bill out of committee. Several observers of the meeting told me that they are confident the legislation will be enacted into law prior to the Super Bowl.

At the committee meeting I was encouraged by the words of Indiana's attorney general as well as other lawmakers. Our state lawmakers are beginning to recognize the severity of the human trafficking issue and the need to make some significant changes to deter traffickers. I also know that the voices of citizens matter.



Governor Mitch Daniels

I suggest that Unificationists find out who are their representatives from their state government's website. Find out what your state is doing to stop human-/sex trafficking. Let your government officials know that your faith tells you that you should get involved. Tell them that this is an epidemic larger than drugs. Have them look at what Indiana is doing and ask how you can help them.

On January 10, 2012, in his State of the State address Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels stated, "We must strengthen our laws against the horrid practice of human trafficking, and we must do it in time for the Super Bowl, the kind of event at which the exploitation of young women is rampant in the absence of such a tough law."

Read more: www.nwitimes.com/news/state-and-regional/indiana/text-of-gov-mitch-daniels-state-of-the-state-address/article_a9ac9d9b-046c-540d-96cf-b83c92ea69c6.html#ixzz1jGhsduLd

Gov. Daniels' efforts encouraged me to start a national petition. I urge all concerned citizens to sign this petition to have the National Football League (NFL) create a public service announcement campaign to "tackle" sex trafficking.

You can sign the petition here: www.thepetitionsite.com/1/stopsextrafficking