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March 13, 2019

Members of the Florida Senate
c/o Secretary of the Senate
Suite 405, The Capitol
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

**RE: STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION OF CS/SB 540
THE “HUMAN TRAFFICKING” BILL**

Dear Senators:

I am President of the Florida Action Committee (FAC), which is a not-for-profit public safety advocacy organization. Our group is comprised of over 2,000 members across Florida, among them persons required to be placed on the sex offender registry. Our members and their families know what it’s like to suffer under the ‘scarlet letter’ of registration.

FAC *strongly* urges you to vote against Senate Bill 540, which among other things would create a “Soliciting for Prostitution Registry”.

Our organization does not defend the acts which caused individuals to become registered, but we advocate for policies that allow them to repent, rehabilitate and return to society as productive members after they have served their full punishment. Most importantly, our organization advocates for policies that reduce recidivism and improve public safety.

Being on a registry does just the opposite. It creates housing instability, employment barriers and social ostracism – all of which are triggers for recidivism. The overwhelming majority of research, including studies conducted by the US Government, demonstrate that registries don’t work. Why anyone would want to create something as debilitating as a registry for misdemeanor offenses, as this bill proposes, is unfathomable.

The Florida Legislature is being manipulated by the sponsor of this bill and the use of the buzzword “human trafficking”. As we saw from the recent massage parlor stings in Jupiter and other Florida cities, Police spent 6 months investigating and netted ZERO arrests for human trafficking. Caught in the net were a couple hundred people who committed misdemeanor offenses whose lives will be forever destroyed and a dozen or so sex workers who were certainly not “rescued” trafficking victims.

To put the problem this bill is supposedly intended to address into perspective; according to the Department of Justice¹, in the five years between 2010 and 2015, federal agencies identified and recovered only 2,071 victims of human trafficking. However, every year more than ten thousand people are killed in drunk driving accidents.² Why are we not rushing to create a DUI registry?

Similarly, while the sex offender registry is supposedly intended to address the concern of ‘stranger danger’, in fact, those are extremely rare occurrences. In most cases the perpetrator of a sexual offense against a minor is someone known to the victim – an uncle, a coach, a nanny. The bottom line is registries do not work.

As elected officials you have a responsibility to consider the practical effect of this bill and whether the measures it prescribes are the most effective way to accomplish the intended goal. You also have a duty to utilize our law enforcement resources responsibly. Please consider the Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) report on the registry³ as a reminder of the bloated, costly and ineffective mess that registries can become.

We encourage you to OPPOSE CS/SB 540 and re-think registries.

Sincerely,

s/

Gail Colletta, President

The Florida Action Committee, Inc.

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¹ <https://www.justice.gov/humantrafficking/page/file/922791/download>

² https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/impaired-drv_factsheet.html

³ <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/MonitorDocs/Reports/pdf/1808rpt.pdf>