

**DISMANTLING THE SEXUAL ABUSE TO PRISON PIPELINE: CHILD SURVIVORS OF SEX TRAFFICKING
2016**

WHEREAS, child sex trafficking is child sexual abuse often layered over pre-existing trauma: children who have been sexually abused are often pushed out of “zero-tolerance” schools when they act out and are not provided appropriate trauma-informed services. Such children are especially vulnerable to traffickers who seek at-risk youth. Child welfare agencies are tasked with responding to child sexual abuse cases, however, they are often unable to function as an alternative to incarceration unless the trafficker is a parent or caretaker, as defined by many state laws;

WHEREAS, even though they are too young to legally consent to sex, many jurisdictions still view survivors of child sex trafficking as perpetrators, and arrest underage girls on charges of prostitution. As a result, numerous exploited and trafficked children--survivors of sexual abuse--are sent into the juvenile justice system and imprisoned as a direct consequence of their victimization;

WHEREAS, laws that criminalize sex with minors are too rarely enforced in the context of child sex trafficking. In such cases, the pimps and buyers of sex with children escape with little or no accountability;

WHEREAS, rape myths that girls are culpable in their assaults have been used to minimize this trafficking;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) will include as part of its 2016-17 Strategic Action Program, in conjunction with its national action campaign to end the sex abuse to prison pipeline, a campaign to raise awareness about the arrest and detention of minors for prostitution, including educating the public on the role of buyers **and traffickers** in perpetuating systematic violence against underage girls, young women, and other vulnerable youth;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NOW will demonstrate support for Nordic model legislation, which is a set of laws and policies that would penalize the demand for commercial sex while decriminalizing individuals in prostitution and providing them with support services, including appropriate care for child survivors of sex trafficking.