

CONCERNED  
WOMEN *for* AMERICA  
LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

February 15, 2024  
House State, Civic, Military, and Veterans Affairs  
Testimony in Support of HB24-1092

Chairman Steven Woodrow, and members of the State, Civic, Military, and Veterans Affairs Committee, I am Dr. Karen Pennington, State Director for Concerned Women for America (CWA) of Colorado. We are the largest grassroots, ~ 500,000 strong, public policy women's organization in the country. I am a nurse and educator and today, I am testifying for Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee in support of HB24-1092.

Some background: the issue of child sex trafficking and prostitution has seen explosive growth in our country. In 2019, it was a \$500 million per year industry in the U.S. In 2023, statistics exploded to \$150 billion per year. The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation cites that a child is bought or sold for sex every two minutes” – every day in this country<sup>1</sup>. This issue is modern-day slavery – and a new abolitionist movement is rising up. We cannot ignore or look the other way any longer. A society is judged on how well it cares for its women and the most vulnerable – its children. The need for this bill reflects how poorly we care for our most vulnerable victims of this egregious crime by currently having no mandatory sentencing. The victim has a **life-long sentence** of multiple traumas, PTSD, and mental and behavioral difficulties<sup>2</sup>. I ask you, why would we NOT want to pass this bill to protect our children? It is the greatest fear of parents and grandparents that justice would not be served to the perpetrators of this crime against our vulnerable. The chance of being caught is the most effective deterrent to reducing crime<sup>3</sup>.

Enforcement of existing Class 2 and Class 3 felony laws to include mandatory court sentencing of at least the minimum term must be imposed for these crimes against children. Consequences for criminal actions do result in a reduction of crime.

Concerned Women for America of Colorado urges you to protect our children from sex trafficking. I ask that you:

- Acknowledge the extent of this harm to our children by enforcement of mandatory term sentences for sex crimes against children.
- Protect our children.
- Vote “Yes” on HB24-1092.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://concernedwomen.org/uncovering-the-epstein-trafficking-ring-with-special-guest-sen-marsha-blackburn/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.dml.regis.edu/doi/full/10.1111/fcre.12742>

<sup>3</sup> <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/five-things-about-deterrence>