



BREAKING NEWS: California Agrees that there is No Such Thing as a Child Prostitute!

Statement from Rights4Girls Executive Director Yasmin Vafa on the passage of CA bill SB 1322

Washington - Today, the California Senate passed SB 1322, which will make the crimes of solicitation and loitering with intent to commit prostitution misdemeanors inapplicable to children younger than 18. Rights4Girls Executive Director Yasmin Vafa statement following the passage of CA bill SB 1322:

"Rights4Girls commends Governor Jerry Brown and Senator Holly Mitchell of California on the passage of SB 1322, otherwise known as the "No Such Thing" bill. This bill makes clear that there is "no such thing as a child prostitute" by making victims of child sex trafficking immune from prosecution for prostitution offenses in the state of California.

"When we launched our No Such Thing campaign one year ago, we set out to eliminate the notion of "child prostitute" in language and in law. Our victories came quickly—first the Los Angeles County Sherriff committed to ending the arrest of victims of child sex trafficking and instead referring them to services, and the LA County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to afford children who are victim witnesses in human trafficking prosecutions the option of testifying through closed-circuit television so that they are not forced to face their exploiters in open court. Our second victory came in April when the Associated Press changed their Style Guide to discourage the use of the term "child prostitute" when referring to victims of child sex trafficking, in response to our petition.

"The passage of SB 1322 is our biggest No Such Thing campaign victory to date. Over the past year, we have worked with survivors and advocates in California to leverage the power of our No Such Thing campaign to influence lawmakers that it was time to make a change—it was time to stop arresting and charging children with prostitution.

"Governor Brown signed three other significant pieces of legislation that we were proud to have contributed to - all echoing the essential principles of our No Such Thing campaign to protect survivors while holding exploiters accountable. These bills included AB 1276, which affords minor victim-witnesses the ability to testify through closed circuit television so they do not have to face their exploiters in open court, AB 1761 which provides an affirmative defense to victims with convictions directly related to their exploitation, and AB 2948, which protects the privacy of victims of human trafficking and expedites prosecutions for buyers.

"The passage of these critical laws marks a clear shift in the public perception of sexually exploited children as victims rather than criminals. We are thrilled that media and lawmakers alike are beginning to understand that there is no such thing as a child prostitute. And as we have seen with many other important issues, California often leads the way for the rest of the nation in creating significant cultural change. Our hope is that other states will follow suit and provide necessary protections for our most vulnerable girls."

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[Rights4Girls](#) is a human rights organization working to end sex trafficking and gender-based violence in the U.S. We advocate for the dignity and personhood of young women and girls - so that every girl may possess the right to be safe and live a life free of violence and exploitation. Based in Washington, D.C., Rights4Girls works to make the lives of U.S. young women and girls a human rights priority.

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