

RIGHTS4GIRLS

Press Statement



RIGHTS4GIRLS STATEMENT ON AP'S DECISION TO END USE OF "CHILD PROSTITUTE"

The Associated Press's revised AP Stylebook now instructs writers to avoid using the word "prostitute" when a child is involved. They made this decision following a several year campaign led by Rights4Girls. The campaign, "No Such Thing As a Child Prostitute," included a Change.org petition penned by Survivor Advocate Withelma "T" Ortiz Walker Pettigrew to the AP urging the organization to cease using the phrase. The petition garnered more than 150,000 names.

**Statement of Yasmin Vafa,
Executive Director, Rights4Girls**

April 4, 2016

"We've always known there's no such thing as a child prostitute and now, thanks to the Associated Press, millions more Americans will know that too.

The Associated Press's decision to end the use of the phrase "child prostitute" is not only a win for accuracy in reporting, but it will go a long way toward changing attitudes about girls who are victims of child sex trafficking. These children are victims of child rape, and they should be treated as such.

The simple fact is that children can't consent to sex, let alone to sell sex.

The Associated Press's decision sends a strong message to the thousands of news outlets across the country that continue to use the phrase "child prostitute." It's time for them to make this change too.

We also need law enforcement to follow the lead of the news media and stop arresting underage girls for "child prostitution," and instead get them the care and support that they need. Los Angeles County became the first law enforcement agency in the country to declare that there is "No Such Thing" as a "child prostitute" and we need more agencies to follow their lead.

Our campaign continues, in partnership with The California Endowment."

Note: The following is a passage from the Columbia Journalism Review report on the Stylebook changes: "AP now recommends that writers avoid using the word "prostitute" when a child is involved, as in "child prostitute," "teenage prostitute," and so forth, because it implies that the child "is voluntarily trading sex for money," [AP standards editor Tom] Kent says, and a child, by definition, cannot do so."

The full story can be found here:

http://www.cjr.org/language_corner/a_matter_of_ap_style.php

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