



UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

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THOMAS M. NOLAN
CHIEF OF POLICE

To:
Shea M. Rhodes, Esquire
Director and Co-Founder
Villanova Law Institute to Address
Commercial Sexual Exploitation

To:
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Ref: SB 554 Safe Harbor

Dear Representatives,

I am Detective Les Glauner with the Upper Merion Township Police Department located in King of Prussia, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. I have been a police officer for almost 20 years, with over 13 years as a Detective working on cases involving juvenile related crimes, sex crimes, sexual exploitation of children, and human trafficking. I am a board certified human trafficking investigator and I am currently cross sworn with the FBI Violent Crimes Against Children Task Force (Philadelphia office). I am writing this letter to show support for SB 554 Safe Harbor. SB 554 Safe Harbor would not only provide added protection for exploited children but also provide further training for police officers to better recognize and assist sexually exploited children.

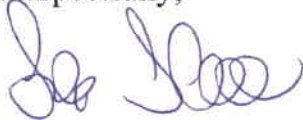
Every investigation conducted by police officers and investigators presents several questions; what crime or crimes have occurred, what specific statute has been violated, and most importantly who is involved with those crimes. Police officer training starts in the academy and continues throughout our careers. We have all received basic training on Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children. We attend formal training sessions, gain knowledge from our own experiences and also from fellow officers. The District Attorney's Office provides information and assistance on a regular basis. All of this underscores the importance of continuing to educate and enlighten officers so they are better suited to deal with any challenging situation.

Victims of sexual exploitation can present a unique challenge to officers and investigators. Quite often the victim will not identify themselves as having been victimized or say that they are in need of assistance. This is the time when an officers training, knowledge, and experience will play a critical role in identifying and aiding these victims. We must look at the circumstances surrounding the incident to see how it has affected our victim. There are almost always other indicators or factors surrounding a victim that have either led to or have aided in their victimization, such as: being a runaway, a throwaway, being sexually assaulted, being tattooed as property of someone, controlled physical appearance, being deprived of water, sleep, or medical care, or freedom of movement. Officers and Investigators must be able to speak with the victim and understand the totality of the circumstances surrounding their problem. SB 554 will provide more training to the officers and investigators tasked with these difficult and delicate cases. SB 554 will also provide funding for non-government agencies (NGO's) which will assist victims with care and support after identification. Examples of aftercare for victims are housing, education, life-skills training and counseling.

SB 554 will also divert sexually exploited children away from the criminal justice system and into the more appropriate realm of human services. This is a key factor of SB 554, seeing these children as victims of crime and not criminals themselves.

For all of these reasons above, increased training and education, funding and support, and diversion away from criminal charges, I wholeheartedly support SB 554.

Respectfully,



Les Glauner
Detective