

Good afternoon.

I have worked for more than a decade to protect girls from domestic sex trafficking. I have seen girls as young as 10 handcuffed and hauled off to juvenile detention, while the predators who paid for sex with these young girls went free.

An independent tracking report commissioned by Women's Funding Network shows, that over the past 6 months, the number of underage girls trafficked online has risen exponentially in three diverse states:

- ↳ Michigan, a 39.2% increase;
- ↳ New York a 20.7% increase; and
- ↳ Minnesota a staggering 64.7% increase.

As you see on the projected slide, the Internet is the predominate source for domestic trafficking of underage girls.

The anonymous veil of the Internet makes this crime practically risk free for traffickers and the men who buy sex with innocent girls. Laws protecting young girls have not kept up with technology.

To demonstrate my point, allow me to play segments of actual voice recordings from men who answered online ads for sex with young girls.

Audio Recording

What you just heard is shocking. And it occurs every day, in most communities, and the calls are made by men who are our neighbors and colleagues.

In an updated study released today, The AIM Group reported craigslist's projected 'Adult Services' revenues were \$44 million dollars across all of its U.S. markets, prior to removing the section. Backpage generates approximately \$17.5 million dollars annually, according to the study; Eros – \$5 million; and the next ten leading competitors, less than \$1 million dollars in revenue annually.

In the 2010 independent study, “Men Who Buy Sex with Adolescent Girls,” more than half of the men responding to ads featuring young girls wanted to continue with the transaction despite multiple warnings that the girl they were about to buy was underage. According to this study, ads on craigslist received 3 times as many responses compared to ads placed on Backpage.

Craigslist’s initial response to this study was a Cease and Desist Demand to Women’s Funding Network and they declined our invitation to sit down and identify solutions.

Backpage’s response – not a word!

While we acknowledge craigslist for its recent action, we are interested in what will be presented today in terms of solutions. We hope the Committee will ask craigslist, how it will make sure no girl is sold on its site?

Notwithstanding the significant role of the Internet, we believe there are both public policy and grassroots efforts that can be deployed to address this issue.

Women's Funding Network, which is one of the largest philanthropic networks in the world, representing women's funds on 6 continents, has accelerated our efforts in the United States to end domestic sex trafficking of girls.

We are making an initial investment of \$1 million dollars to support the work of our member funds. This investment will go toward replicating the successful model of "A Future. Not A Past.," a campaign with amazing results in Georgia. Michigan Women's Foundation, Women's Foundation of Minnesota, The New York Women's Foundation and Dallas Women's Foundation are mounting statewide efforts.

The Georgia model combines independent research, law enforcement training, a statewide system of care and grassroots leadership. During this past 6 months the numbers of girls being exploited in Georgia is trending downward.

Women's Funding Network stands side-by-side with Congress, law enforcement and fellow advocacy organizations. We will use the collective voices of our 151 members in 42 states representing hundreds of thousands of women and men to end domestic trafficking of underage girls – whether it's on the streets, through escort services – and Yes, online.

Congress is key in addressing this issue. We ask you to:

-- Decriminalize girls who are trafficked, instead provide them with care and protection as victims and services for their rescue and restoration.

--Allocate resources to law enforcement to increase arrests, prosecuting both the traffickers and the predators that put our girls at risk.

-- Pass the “Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Deterrence and Victims Support Act of 2010” that creates critical funding.

-- Most importantly, the facilitation and exploitation of girls through commercial enterprises is against federal law. To ultimately address this, we ask the Department of Justice to aggressively investigate and prosecute those who break federal law. We cannot completely prosecute our way out of this issue. This is why we must address the demand.

craigslist, Backpage and others – what is your solution to the role you play in perpetuating this crime?

Together as a nation, that holds the highest value on human rights, we must come together and create no tolerance for buying and selling our children for sex.

Our girls are waiting for us, and we are honor bound to act.

Thank you.