

PROTECTED INNOCENCE CHALLENGE

STATE ACTION. NATIONAL CHANGE.

Kentucky Report Card 2016

Kentucky's human trafficking law includes trafficking minors under 18 for commercial sexual activity without regard to use of force, fraud, or coercion and provides serious penalties; however, law enforcement are without the critical investigative tool of wiretaps. A comprehensive protective response is statutorily authorized for domestic minor sex trafficking victims.

Final Score

85

Final Grade

B



10

10

20.5

25

15

15

6

10

21

27.5

12.5

15



Criminalization of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

Kentucky's human trafficking law includes trafficking minors under 18 for commercial sexual activity without regard to use of force, fraud, or coercion. Additionally, the state commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) laws include: use of a minor in a sexual performance, promoting a sexual performance by a minor, using the Internet to procure a minor for sex trafficking and child pornography, and unlawful transaction with a minor in the third degree, which includes transactions for purposes of prostitution. The prostitution law refers to the human trafficking statute to eliminate criminal liability for minors under the prostitution law and establishes an affirmative defense to other non-violent offenses for victims of human trafficking. Kentucky's organized crime law includes human trafficking as a predicate offense, allowing this law to be used for prosecuting trafficking enterprises.



Criminal Provisions Addressing Demand

The state human trafficking law applies to buyers who intentionally subject a minor to commercial sexual activity and, following federal precedent, through the term "obtains." The criminal solicitation statute does not distinguish between purchasing commercial sex acts with an adult versus a minor, but unlawful transaction with a minor in the third degree, which includes transactions for purposes of prostitution, may be used to prosecute buyers of sex with minors. Buyers also face criminal liability for using the Internet to procure a minor for sex trafficking and child pornography. Buyers are prohibited from asserting a defense to prosecution based on age mistake in human trafficking prosecutions, but not for CSEC offenses. Buyers convicted of unlawful transaction with a minor in the third degree must pay restitution to their victims, and buyers convicted of human trafficking must pay a \$10,000 fee. Buyers are required to register as offenders if convicted of human trafficking or possessing child pornography. Buyers convicted of possessing child pornography and using the Internet to procure a minor for unlawful sex acts face mandatory criminal asset forfeiture.



Criminal Provisions for Traffickers

Under the human trafficking law, a person convicted of sex trafficking a minor is subject to 10–20 years imprisonment. Using a minor under 16 in a sexual performance and producing a sexual performance of a minor are also punishable by 10–20 years imprisonment, while using a minor age 16 or 17 in a sexual performance and promoting human trafficking are punishable by 5–10 years imprisonment. All of these crimes are subject to a fine of \$1,000–\$10,000 or "double [the] gain from commission of the offense." Traffickers convicted of human trafficking or promoting human trafficking face an additional \$10,000 fee. Using a communication system, including the Internet, to procure a minor or promote a minor for sex trafficking or child pornography is a separate offense. Kentucky's sex offender registration law requires convicted offenders of sex trafficking, promoting prostitution when involving a minor, and producing child pornography to register. A court can terminate a trafficker's parental rights for any criminal charge relating to the physical or sexual abuse of any child if the trafficker's child is also at risk. A trafficker is subject to mandatory criminal asset forfeiture for violations of CSEC laws, child pornography offenses, and using the Internet to procure a minor, but not for sex trafficking or promoting prostitution of a minor. Convicted traffickers must pay victim restitution.

Demand | Selected Commercial Sex Crimes

Crime (name of law abridged)	Classification	Sentence	Fine	Asset Forfeiture (available)
Human trafficking (§ 529.100)	Class B felony	10-20 years	\$1,000-\$10,000	
Unlawful transaction with a minor in the 3rd degree (§ 530.070)	Class A misdemeanor	Max. 1 year	Max. \$500	○
Possession of child pornography (§ 531.335(1))	Class D felony	1-5 years	\$1,000-\$10,000 or double the gain from the commission of the offense	●

All criminal penalties are statutory; many states also have sentencing guidelines that are not codified which affect sentencing.



Protective Provisions for the Child Victims

All commercially sexually exploited children are defined as juvenile sex trafficking victims. Willingness of a minor to engage in a commercial sex act is not a prohibited defense, leaving this an issue in a case of domestic minor sex trafficking. Kentucky provides domestic minor sex trafficking victims a comprehensive protective response through the child welfare process. Minors who engage in prostitution or commit status offenses as a result of their victimization are protected from prosecution and must be referred to child welfare for assessment and treatment. Domestic minor sex trafficking victims charged with offenses other than prostitution may still be identified and transferred to child welfare. A victim of human trafficking does not have to be identified as an abused or neglected child in order to receive protection through child protective services since child welfare is authorized to provide specialized services and treatment to minor human trafficking victims regardless of whether a parent or guardian was responsible for the child's exploitation. Victims of sex trafficking are eligible for crime victims' compensation but face potential barriers to recovery. Claims must be filed within five years, and the crime must be reported to law enforcement within 48 hours; both may be waived for good cause. A victim who is found to have contributed to the injury may have compensation reduced or denied. Kentucky's "rape shield" law, which applies in any proceeding involving alleged sexual misconduct to limit traumatizing cross-examination of testifying victims, may provide protection to sex trafficking and CSEC victims. CSEC and human trafficking victims under 12 are permitted to testify via closed circuit television. Victims may apply for expungement of juvenile criminal records stemming from prostitution-related offenses resulting from trafficking victimization two years after the release from juvenile detention or court jurisdiction. Victims of any crime are entitled to restitution for pecuniary losses, and civil remedies are available for human trafficking and some CSEC offenses, including use of a minor in a sexual performance and promoting a sexual performance by a minor. Prosecutions for sex trafficking of minors are not subject to a statute of limitations, but misdemeanor CSEC offenses, such as promoting the prostitution of one victim, must be brought within one year. A victim must bring a civil case by the time the victim reaches 23 or within five years of the time that the victim should have known of the offense, limiting a minor sex trafficking victim's access to civil remedies.



Criminal Justice Tools for Investigation and Prosecution

Kentucky law mandates law enforcement training on human trafficking. The law permits single party consent to audiotaping, but prohibits wiretaps without exception, leaving law enforcement without this important tool for sex trafficking investigations and prosecutions. The offense that criminalizes use of electronic communications to procure or promote a minor for sex trafficking or child pornography permits the use of a law enforcement decoy to investigate domestic minor sex trafficking and enables law enforcement officers to use the Internet to investigate traffickers and buyers, meaning that a defendant would be barred from asserting a defense to prosecution based on the fact that an actual minor was not involved. State law mandates reporting by law enforcement of both missing and recovered children to the state database and National Crime Information Center within 24 hours.



Criminal Provisions for Facilitators

Those who benefit financially from human trafficking are guilty of promoting human trafficking. Promoting human trafficking and promoting a sexual performance of a minor age 16 or 17 are felonies punishable by 5–10 years imprisonment. When the victim is under 16, promoting a sexual performance of a minor is a felony punishable by 10–20 years imprisonment. Facilitators convicted of promoting human trafficking are also subject to an additional \$10,000 fee. Sex tourism is not a crime in Kentucky. First offenses for distribution and advertising child pornography are felonies punishable by 1–5 years imprisonment and carry a possible fine of \$1,000–\$10,000 "or double [the] gain from commission of the offense." However, a first offense for selling child pornography is only a Class A misdemeanor punishable by up to 1 year imprisonment and a fine up to \$500. A facilitator is subject to mandatory criminal asset forfeiture for violations of child pornography offenses, but not promoting human trafficking. Victim restitution is mandatory.

The Report Card is based on the Protected Innocence Legislative Framework, an analysis of state laws performed by the American Center for Law & Justice and Shared Hope International, and sets a national standard of protection against domestic minor sex trafficking. To access the Protected Innocence Legislative Framework Methodology, each completed Report Card, and foundational analysis and recommendations, please visit: www.sharedhope.org.