

Area of Law	Criminal Provisions Addressing Demand
The Policy Point	Solicitation of prostitution laws differentiate between buying sex acts with an adult and buying sex acts with a minor under 18.
The Legislative Solution	Solicitation statutes should not apply to a buyer of commercial sex acts with a minor. These laws are intended to address the vice crime of prostitution and typically permit a lenient punitive response to the buyer that is inconsistent with the serious crime of commercial sexual exploitation of a child (CSEC). In some states a diversion program or “John School” which is geared toward behavior change rather than punishment are mandated as punishment for solicitation; these types of responses are inappropriate to the crime of CSEC or child sex trafficking and inadequate to deter demand for commercial sex with minors. Amending solicitation or patronizing prostitution statutes to ensure a buyer of sex with a minor under 18 is properly identified and punished for the crime of child sex trafficking is essential for serious criminal deterrence.

Select Statute Highlights

The statutes highlighted below are either distinct from prostitution laws or contain provisions specifying the more serious crime of soliciting or patronizing a minor for prostitution and providing heightened penalties.

Hawaii

Pursuant to Enacted House Bill 1606, “(1) A person eighteen years of age or older commits the offense of solicitation of a minor for prostitution if the person offers or agrees to pay a fee to a minor to engage in sexual conduct. (2) Solicitation of a minor for prostitution is a class C felony. (3) A person convicted of committing the offense of solicitation of a minor for prostitution shall be imposed a fine of not less than \$2,000; provided that \$2,000 of the imposed fine shall be credited to the general fund. (4) For purposes of this section: ‘Minor’ means a person who is less than eighteen years of age. ‘Sexual conduct’ has the same meaning as in section 712-1200(2) [Prostitution].”

New Jersey

N.J. Stat. Ann. § 2C:34-1 (Prostitution and related offenses) provides an enhanced penalty provision within the general prostitution law. The law states, “b. A person commits an offense if: (1) The actor engages in prostitution [punishable as a disorderly persons offense]; . . . (7) The actor knowingly engages in prostitution with a person under the age of 18, or

if the actor enters into or remains in a house of prostitution for the purpose of engaging in sexual activity with a child under the age of 18, or if the actor solicits or requests a child under the age of 18 to engage in sexual activity. It shall be no defense to a prosecution under this paragraph that the actor mistakenly believed that the child was 18 years of age or older, even if such mistaken belief was reasonable.”

Rhode Island

R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-37-8.8(a) (Indecent solicitation of a child) is a separate statute from R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-34.1-3(a) (Procurement of sexual conduct for a fee). It provides, “A person is guilty of indecent solicitation of a child if he or she knowingly solicits another person under eighteen(18) years of age or one whom he or she believes is a person under eighteen (18) years of age for the purpose of engaging in prostitution.”

South Carolina

S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-425 (Participating in prostitution of a minor defined) is codified in Chapter 15, Article 3 (Obscenity, material harmful to minors, child exploitation, and child prostitution), separate and apart from the prostitution laws, and makes it a crime for any individual “(A) . . . if he is not a minor and he patronizes a minor prostitute . . . (1) soliciting or requesting a minor to participate in prostitution; (2) paying or agreeing to pay a minor, either directly or through the minor’s agent, to participate in prostitution; . . . (C) A

person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be imprisoned not less than two years nor more than five years. No part of the minimum sentence may be suspended nor is the individual convicted eligible for parole until he has served the minimum term. Sentences imposed pursuant to this section shall run consecutively with and shall commence at the expiration of any other sentence being served by the individual sentenced.”

Tennessee

Tenn. Code Ann. § 39-13-514 (Patronizing prostitution) provides, “(a) A person commits an offense under this section who patronizes prostitution. (b) (1) Patronizing prostitution is a Class B misdemeanor . . . (4)(A) Patronizing prostitution from a person who is younger than eighteen (18) years of age or has an intellectual disability is a Class E felony.” “Patronizing prostitution” is defined as “soliciting or hiring another person with the intent that the other person engage in prostitution, or entering or remaining in a house of prostitution for the purpose of engaging in sexual activity.” Tenn. Code Ann. § 39-13-512(3).

Texas

Under Tex. Penal Code § 43.02 (Prostitution), “(a) A person commits an offense if he knowingly: (1) offers to engage, agrees to engage, or engages in sexual conduct for a fee; or (2) solicits another in a public place to engage with him in sexual conduct for hire. . . . (c) An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor, except that the offense is: . . . (3) a felony of the third degree if the person solicited is 14 years of age or older and younger than 18 years of age; or (4) a felony of the second degree if the person solicited is younger than 14 years of age.”

Utah

Utah Code Ann. § 76-10-1303 (Patronizing a prostitute) states that “(1) A person is guilty of patronizing a prostitute when (a) the person pays or offers or agrees to pay another person a fee for the purpose of engaging in an act of sexual activity; or (b) the person enters or remains in a house of prostitution for the purpose of engaging in sexual activity. (2) Patronizing a prostitute is a class B misdemeanor, except as provided in Subsection (3) . . . (3) If the patronizing of a prostitute under Subsection (1)(a) involves a child as the other person, a violation of Subsection (1)(a) is a third degree felony.”

Virginia

Va. Code Ann. § 18.2-346(B) (Prostitution; commercial sexual conduct; commercial sexual exploitation of a minor; penalties) provides that “[a]ny person who offers money or its equivalent to another for the purpose of engaging in sexual acts . . . and thereafter does any substantial act in furtherance thereof is guilty of solicitation of prostitution, which is punishable as a Class 1 misdemeanor. However, any person who solicits prostitution from a minor (i) 16 years of age or older is guilty of a Class 6 felony or (ii) younger than 16 years of age is guilty of a Class 5 felony.” “Sexual acts” include “adultery, fornication, or any act in violation of § 18.2-361 [Crimes against nature; penalty], or (ii) offers to commit adultery, fornication, or any act in violation of § 18.2-361 [Crimes against nature; penalty].” Va. Code Ann. § 18.2-346(A).