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Executive Director

Betsy Butler

March 23, 2021

The Honorable Dave Cortese
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 3070
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 435 (Cortese) – Support

Dear Senator Cortese,

As a co-sponsor of SB 435, “The Ending Online Sexual Trafficking and Exploitation Act”, we write in support of this legislation which will allow a victim of online sexual trafficking to bring a civil action for damages against any person or entity that makes, obtains, uploads, reloads or distributes in any form (including through electronic distribution), any non-consensual or sexually explicit content.

Online sexual exploitation and trafficking is a growing concern in California. The internet is the biggest platform for this kind of abuse and websites that host non-consensual sexual material profit from the victimization and make billions in advertising revenue every day. Currently, the law excludes civil claims for this type of activity if the material at issue has already been distributed by anyone else at any time, allowing the content to circulate further and beyond the victim’s control. This bill also allows the Attorney General to take action against repeat offenders.

SB 435 is the first bill of its kind in the nation to tackle online sex trafficking. It would give victims of any age avenues for recourse in situations where the victim was coerced, tricked, or forced into a sexual act, and where content that is sexual in nature is circulated in any way without permission. Those who offend minors will have larger fines and penalties.

CWLC’s mission is to create a more just and equitable society by breaking down barriers and advancing the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy, and education. SB 435 would put power in the hands of survivors and provide legal avenues to fight their perpetrators.

For these reasons, the California Women’s Law Center is a proud sponsor of SB 435.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler
Executive Director