

Roberta DiMezza

From: Joe Baxter <jbaxter@capcomgrp.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2026 1:17 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Testimony in Favor of 26-H 7201
Attachments: PACT_Support_RIHB7201.pdf; Dr Stacy_Support_RIHB7201.pdf; Peracchi_Support_RIHB7201.pdf; Dr Hughes_Support_RIHB7201.pdf; Shively_Support_RIHB7201.pdf; R4G House Judiciary Testimony in Support of HB 7201.pdf; R4G_Support_RIHB7201.pdf; Buyer Accountability Leg Memo.pdf; TJP Advocacy_Support_RIHB7201.pdf; Doody_Support_RIHB7201.pdf

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Good afternoon,

Attached please find written testimony in favor of 26-H 720, submitted on behalf of Rights4Girls.

Thank you,

Joe

Joseph P. Baxter, Esq.
Capitol Communications Group
Mobile (401) 300-8080



Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee

Testimony of Sheena Dumé
Advocacy Program Manager, PACT (Protect All Children from Trafficking)
www.wearepact.org
In Support of HB 7201
April 9, 2026

Thank you, Members of the Committee, for taking the time to consider testimony in strong support of HB 7201, and thank you, Chair McEntee, for your leadership in introducing this bill. My name is **Sheena Dumé**, and I serve as Advocacy Program Manager at PACT—Protect All Children from Trafficking. Founded more than 35 years ago, PACT is a national nonprofit dedicated to ending child sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. We work across the country to advance policy solutions that protect vulnerable young people and ensure justice for survivors. Our work is informed and guided by survivor voices who form the heart of what we do.

HB 7201 is a practical and meaningful step towards addressing the demand that fuels exploitation. It ensures that those convicted of buying sex pay a \$1,000 fee on top of any assessed fine. This fee serves multiple purposes:

- It **dissuades** would-be sex buyers by raising the financial impact of getting caught.
- It **educates** would-be sex buyers on the harms of commercial sex, including its relationship to human trafficking.
- It **supports survivors** by funding the crime victims compensation fund.
- And it **incentivizes law enforcement** to pursue sex buyers and make arrests.

This is smart policy: it holds the demand side accountable, funds survivor services, and puts resources where they are most needed. These aren't just hypothetical policy outcomes, they are meaningful interventions that directly affect whether exploitation continues or is disrupted.

In my work at PACT, I've seen how systems often fail to hold buyers accountable, while those who have been exploited are left to navigate the consequences. We see every day the devastating harm that commercial sexual exploitation causes to children and young people. I've witnessed firsthand how minors and young adults — disproportionately girls and young women of color, youth in foster care and LGBTQ+ youth are affected and need protective policies like this. They are there because demand exists and buyers too often face few if any consequences. **Every time a buyer walks away without facing accountability, we send the message that these young lives are disposable. HB 7201 sends a different message.**

Across the country, we know this approach works. In the last five years, six states have made sex-buying a felony, and several more—including New Hampshire, California, and New Jersey—have increased fines on buyers and directed those funds to survivor support. Rhode Island has an opportunity today to join a growing national movement that recognizes demand reduction as a primary prevention strategy for trafficking. Where there are no buyers, there is no business. And at a moment when federal funding for survivors is uncertain, this bill creates a

self-sustaining revenue stream that does not depend on Washington.

I'd like this Committee to understand—this isn't just about policy decisions, it's about whether we allow exploitation to continue unchecked. We have the opportunity right now to put action behind words, protect these young lives, and set a precedent. I respectfully urge the Committee to seize the moment and stand with survivors and vote YES on HB 7201 to make Rhode Island a leader in protecting our most vulnerable.

April 9, 2026,

Thank you, Members of the Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee, for taking the time to consider testimony on this important piece of legislation. And thank you, Chair McEntee, for your leadership in introducing this bill. My name is Dr. Stacy Reed-Barnes. I am a survivor. Today, **I am testifying in strong support of HB 7201.**

I am before you not only as a professional with 20 plus years of experience in the human services field, but as a survivor, advocate, and founder of Stacy's Joy Incorporated, a survivor-led nonprofit dedicated to supporting individuals impacted by human trafficking, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, substance use, mental health, and systemic inequities.

I am here in strong support of HB 7201 because I have both experiences and seen, firsthand, what happens when systems fail to hold exploiters accountable and what happens when survivors are left to navigate trauma without protection, resources, or justice. Every day, I work with women who have been exploited, manipulated, and coerced. Many of whom never identified themselves as "victims" because their exploitation was normalized, minimized, or ignored. These are not isolated cases. These are patterns, patterns fueled by demand, by lack of accountability, and by systems that often respond too late.

HB 7201 represents more than policy it represents a commitment to shifting the narrative. A commitment to recognizing that exploitation does not happen in a vacuum. It happens because there are individuals who create demand, who profit, and who operate with the belief that they will not be held accountable. From my lived experience and my professional work, I can tell you this clearly, when we fail to address demand, we fail survivors.

Survivors do not need more systems that criminalize their trauma or overlook their pain. They need systems that protect, uplift, and invest in their healing. They need pathways to safety, stability, and restoration not cycles of harm. HB 7201 helps move us in that direction by prioritizing accountability where it belongs and reinforcing the need for a coordinated, trauma-informed response.

I also want to emphasize that survivors are resilient, but resilience should not be a requirement for survival. We must create environments where individuals are not forced to endure harm before they are seen, heard, and supported. As someone who has lived this reality and now works daily to support others moving forward, I urge you to stand with survivors, not just in words, but in action. Passing HB 7201 is a step toward justice. A step toward accountability. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your commitment to protecting the most vulnerable in our communities.

Respectfully,

Dr. Stacy Reed-Barnes, PsyD
Stacy's Joy Incorporated
Founder & Executive Director
stacysjoyinc@gmail.com



Testimony Submitted to:
Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee
In Support of HB 7201

Bella Peracchi, Policy Associate
World Without Exploitation
Thursday, April 9, 2026

Dear Chairwoman McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Bella Peracchi, and I am an anti-trafficking advocate from New Hampshire and the Policy Associate at World Without Exploitation (WorldWE). WorldWE is the largest national anti-sex trafficking coalition in the country, representing nearly 200 member organizations, many of which are survivor-led and work directly to provide services and support to those in the sex trade. We unite communities across the country to advocate for policies to permanently combat human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and their underlying causes. Today, I am here to urge you all to support HB 7201.

The global sex trade is fueled by the exploitation of vulnerable women and children by sex buyers through power imbalances and coercion. A U.S.-based study of sex trafficking survivors found that 92% of women in the sex trade reported being raped, shot, strangled, burned, beaten, stabbed, or punched.¹ Violence is not an exception in the sex trade—it is the norm.

The vast majority of those in prostitution entered the commercial sex trade before their 15th birthday, often coming from abusive or neglectful homes, and therefore not entering by choice. In most cases, their lives have been affected by poverty, homelessness, and/or failures in the foster care system.

There is one primary root cause of sex trafficking: the demand for paid sex. Demand from sex buyers fuels sexual exploitation and directly drives prostitution and trafficking. Research indicates that sex buyers are often middle-aged men with disposable income who purchase women, girls, immigrants, and LGBTQ+ individuals, predominantly people of color. High-frequency buyers are much more likely than other men to make \$100,000 or more annually.²

Rather than sex buyers being held accountable for the harms they perpetrate, they are offered impunity and anonymity. A study by Shared Hope International revealed that, in 134 cases of men purchasing sexual acts from minors, 26% served no time, and 69% of all sentences were ultimately suspended.³

When prostitution was legal in Rhode Island between 1980 and 2009, there was an increase in violence, exploitation, and lawlessness, leading the state to reverse the law. The Mayor of Providence even described Rhode Island as a ‘true

¹ Lederer, L. and Wetzel, C. (2014). The Health Consequences of Sex Trafficking and Their Implications for Identifying Victims in Healthcare Facilities. *Annals of Health Law* 23 (1): 61-91. <https://www.globalcenturion.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/The-Health-Consequences-of-Sex-Trafficking.pdf>

² Jody Raphael and Katie Feifer, *Get the Facts: What We Know About Sex Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation and Prostitution in the United States*, originally published February 2017, updated January 2020 (World Without Exploitation), 16, https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/5b7ed53e01b9702b9df675b/5e1cd98f61e439d812b34ed3_Get_the_Facts_January_2020.pdf

³ Patty Hastings, "Shared Hope study: Courts treat buyers of child sex too lightly," *The Columbian*, August 27, 2014, <https://www.columbian.com/news/2014/aug/28/shared-hope-study-courts-treat-buyers-of-child-sex/>

wild west', due to the heightened sex tourism and sex trafficking in the state.⁴ During this period, Providence was known as the 'red light district' of New England.⁵ Police officers expressed support for legislation aimed at addressing prostitution, acknowledging their inability to curb pimping and sex trafficking. Rhode Island exemplifies the dangers of demand by sex buyers, exacerbating sex trafficking.

HB 7201 tackles demand by imposing a \$1,000 fine on sex buyers, an amount that is often less than what they expend to commit this horrific crime. These funds will be allocated to the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund, providing critical services and resources to victims in Rhode Island, giving them the chance to escape this vicious cycle, leave their abusers, and have a chance at a new life. Additionally, a small portion of the funds is directed toward sex buyer accountability programs to prevent recidivism, as well as to law enforcement to incentivize arrests and ensure demand reduction.

Currently, legislatures across the country are considering further measures to hold buyers accountable. Two states this session elevated sex buying to a felony offense, bringing the total of six states to enact this measure since 2021. Additionally, 18 states have pending legislation that would hold sex buyers accountable.

In this national moment of reckoning—when the country is confronting the reality of how Jeffrey Epstein trafficked women and girls to powerful men who treated them as commodities—it is not the time to normalize or decriminalize the purchase of vulnerable people for sex. The lessons emerging from these revelations are clear: exploitation thrives when those with power and resources are shielded from accountability. This is about demand, and the systems that enable those generating the demand to exploit those with the fewest options.

It is time for Rhode Island to make this transformative decision, which will save lives and help eradicate demand. In light of this, I ask you to please support HB 7201. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,
Bella Peracchi

⁴ David N. Cicilline, *Time to End Legalized Prostitution in R.I.*, PROVIDENCE J., May 19, 2009, at Commentary 6.

⁵ W. Zachary Malinowski, *Sex Industry Expands at Startling Pace.*, PROVIDENCE J., Apr. 23, 2002, at A1.

World Without Exploitation is a fiscally-sponsored project of Tides Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

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Donna M. Hughes
Eleanor M. and Oscar M. Carlson Endowed Chair in Women's Studies
Professor of Gender and Women's Studies, Emerita
University of Rhode Island

9 Apr 2026

Members of the Rhode Island House of Representatives:

I am writing to endorse House Bill 7201 (and Senate Bill 2145).

As a professor at the University of Rhode Island, I have done extensive research on the impact of decriminalized prostitution, particularly in Rhode Island. I have published numerous reports, peer-reviewed papers, and opinion editorials on the harm and exploitation of prostitution.

In the past, I have testified before the Rhode Island Senate and House on the harm of prostitution and how removing criminal penalties, especially from sex buyers, allows the expansion of the sex industry and causes an increase in sex trafficking. These serious crimes are perpetrated by individual criminals and organized crime groups.

Therefore, I support holding sex buyers criminally accountable. I support enhanced penalties for sex buyers.

I am aware of many sex buyer accountability programs around the United States. They have a record of educating sex buyers and changing their behavior.

Enhanced penalties result in reduced recidivism among sex buyers. This will reduce harmful criminal activity and decrease the harm done to a vulnerable population in Rhode Island.

Respectfully,

Donna M Hughes, Ph.D.
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Rhode Island House Committee on Judiciary
April 9, 2026

Testimony in Support of House Bill 7201
An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Commercial Sexual Activity

Michael Shively, Ph.D.
Senior Advisor on Research and Policy
National Center on Sexual Exploitation, Street Grace
Member of New Englanders Against Sexual Exploitation

Thank you, honorable members of the House Judiciary Committee for taking the time to hear testimony on this important bill. My name is Michael Shively, and I am the Senior Advisor on Research and Policy for the National Center on Sexual Exploitation and to Street Grace, and a member of New Englanders Against Sexual Exploitation. I have conducted research on criminal justice system responses to prostitution and sex trafficking for more than 20 years. Beginning in 2005 I had a continuous series of grants from the U.S. Department of Justice to conduct research on exactly the issues addressed by H7201, including studies of prostitution demand reduction, sex trafficking victimization and prevalence, and the motivations and traits of sex traffickers and the criminal enterprises they operate. One of my DOJ grants was for conducting a three-year evaluation of a **sex buyer accountability program** much like the model proposed in H7201.

Decades of conducting original research and reviewing thousands of studies and other source documents lead me to **strongly support this bill.**

If someone told you that prostitution and sex trafficking could be cut in half with a program that is evidence-based, sustainable, easily implemented with existing resources, has no evident unintended consequences or risks, and is free to taxpayers... would you take it? If so, you must pass H7201 into law.

The demand for prostitution and trafficked sex is extremely strong in Rhode Island, and generates great harm. Just this week, Street Grace posted just one advertisement on just one website used for commercial sex in Rhode Island. In just 13 hours in Providence, 156 unique individuals responded and exchanged over 3,700 messages in their efforts to buy sex. In Warwick, 94 men responded in less than 7 hours, exchanging over 2,200 messages.

Location	Dates	Duration (hours)	# Sex Buyers Responding	# Messages Exchanged
Rhode Island				
Providence	April 2-3	13	156	3,704
Warwick	April 6	6.5	94	2,245

That is the tip of the iceberg. There are **more than 100 websites with Rhode Island listings** on which commercial sex is solicited, in addition to **hundreds of additional in-person venues** used to conduct prostitution and sex trafficking (a list is appended provided below).

The harm of this immense activity is well documented and admitted by sex trade representatives. The question is what to do about it.

The evidence-based approach is to arrest sex buyers, educate them, and use the revenue they can provide for survivor support. That is what is proposed in H7201.

- I have studied over 100 sex buyer education and treatment programs, and learned that they are typically **free to taxpayers**, funded entirely by fees or fines by the arrested individuals.
- **These programs are in fact revenue-positive**, generating substantial income:
 - In **Tennessee and California**, sex buyer education programs contributed between \$50k and \$100k per year to survivor support programs.
 - The San Francisco program produced over **\$1m for survivor support**, and **\$2m for the Police Department and District Attorney's Offices**, all from fees paid by arrested sex buyers.

Unlike most criminal justice and social programs, there is **very solid research evidence** from prior applications elsewhere that **sex buyer education programs are effective**, without offsetting risks or unintended consequences. I will provide links to studies and other sources in a separate document, but briefly, adding sex buyer education to arrests has resulted in, e.g.:

- 45% reduction in recidivism due to San Francisco's First Offender Prostitution Program.
- 40% reduction in calls for service in Buffalo, NY when adding john school for arrested sex buyers.
- 75% reduction in prostitution in Bolton, UK.

The fees proposed in H7201 are reasonable: One thing sex buyers have demonstrated is possession of discretionary income, and the vast majority will be able to pay fees and fines. The nationwide average fee is over \$500, and can be as much as **\$1,500** (Norfolk, VA).

Rhode Island cities have the capabilities and motivation to arrest and sanction sex buyers, and H7201 would provide additional tools and incentives.

- **Sex buyers have been arrested in at least 14 Rhode Island cities**, and 22 cities have used at least one demand-reduction tactic (details are provided below).

There is precedent for H7201: Texas passed similar legislation in 2011 ([HB1994](#)).

Other states have also taken a state-wide approach: The Attorney General's Office of **Ohio** has taken a strong stand against sex trafficking and prostitution, supporting sting operations to arrest sex buyers and establishing a [state-wide grant program](#) and guidelines to encourage buyer education programs.

Free and effective is very hard to come by, and if the goal is to respond to communities who want prostitution and sex trafficking to stop, **there is no good reason oppose H7201.**

The only argument against it is ideological and would benefit only those who currently profit from the commercial sex industry. "Sex work" advocates are industry representatives who asking you to take the most dangerous form of commerce that exists, and to abolish laws against it. Decriminalize Sex Work, the ACLU, and their allies are insisting that this already dangerous commerce should operate with NO regulations, oversight, or taxation. **Supporting decriminalization would in fact set a precedent for just one type of business to be free of any obligation to adhere to health and safety standards, provide employee records, to be properly licensed, adhere to zoning laws, pay unemployment insurance or income taxes, or contribute to social security.** Pimps could set up brothels or street operations literally anywhere, and nobody could do anything about it if it becomes fully decriminalized. Sex work advocates are arguing that this would somehow be fair and just, while ALL other businesses – ALL of which are less problematic - must follow laws, regulations, and pay taxes.

I would urge you not to be distracted by a tiny but vocal special interest group, and listen instead to the residents, businesses, and survivors of the sex trade who all want prostitution to end. Sex trafficking

cannot exist without prostitution, so ending prostitution ends trafficking. H7201 assumes that abolition is the objective, and offers a cost-effective, proven method of achieving that goal.

Rhode Island Commercial Sex Venues, Websites

April, 2026

Physical Locations used for In-Person Solicitation of Prostitution

- Strip Clubs, e.g.
 - Foxy Lady – Providence
 - Cadillac Lounge - Providence
 - Wonderland – Providence
 - Desire Gentlemen's Club – Providence
 - Club Fantasies – Providence
 - The Mega-Plex - Providence
 - Rhode Island Dolls – Woonsocket
 - Mickey's Gentlemen's Club - Cumberland
- Massage businesses
- Nail salons
- Spas / Massage business
 - More than 50 with [documented prostitution](#) & [arrests](#)
- Gyms
- Bars, Taverns

Generic Online Apps, Platforms Used for Soliciting Prostitution

- Gaming systems (e.g., Xbox)
- Social media (e.g., Discord, Instagram, Onlyfans, Reddit, Snapchat, TikTok)
- Messaging apps (e.g., Session, Signal, Sniffles, Telegram, WhatsApp, Wire)
- Advertising websites, community forums (e.g., Craigslist)

Commercial Sex/Escort Websites with Rhode Island Listings

1. Ads Encounters
<https://adsencounters.com/rhode-island-r782081>
2. Adult Search
<https://adultsearch.com/us/rhode-island/female-escorts>
3. Atlas Escorts
<https://us.atlasescorts.com/escorts-in-rhode-island>
4. 2Backpage
<https://providence.2backpage.com>
5. Backlist24
<https://providence.backlist24.com/post/female-escorts>
6. Backpagegals.com
https://backpagegals.com/escorts_providence-c50337
7. Bedpage
<https://us-providence.bedpage.com>
8. Bonepage
<https://providence.bonepage.com>
9. Bunnyagent
<https://bunnyagent.com/us/rhode-island/female-escorts>
10. CallEscort
https://callescort.org/index.php?state=Rhode-Island&city=Providence&p=1&order=age_reverse
11. City Hotties
<https://www.cityhotties.com/listing-location/rhode-island/>

12. Colton SD
<https://www.coltonsd.com/us/independent-escorts/rhode-island>
13. Emerans
<https://emerans.com/escorts/usa/rhode-island>
14. Eros.com
https://www.eros.com/rhode_island/providence/eros.htm
15. Erotic Monkey
<https://www.eroticmonkey.ch/escorts-warwick-564>
16. Erotic Review
<https://www.theeroticreview.com/reviews/city-providence-ri-us/escorts>
17. Escort Access
<https://escortaccess.net>
18. Escort Ads
<https://www.escort-ads.com/escorts/united-states/providence>
19. Escort Babylon
https://escortbabylon.net/provider_list/last_review/providence/1
20. Escort IZ
<https://www.escortiz.com/escorts/providence-ri>
21. Escorts Affair
<https://us.escortsaffair.com/providence>
22. Gemidos.tv
<https://gemidos.tv/usa-rhode-island?hl=en>
23. Harlot Hub
<https://harloithub.com/search/female-escorts/providence/ri-escort-services/index3.html>
24. Hookers Near Me
<https://hookers-near-me.com/hookers-in-providence/>
25. Hot.com
<https://hot.com/us/ri/providence/escorts/gallery>
26. Hot VIP Escort
<https://www.hotvipescort.com/en/united-states/rhode-island/>
27. Kitty Ads
<https://www.kittyads.com/ads3-321-US-Rhode-Island-Rhode-Island-Escorts>
28. Ladys.one
<https://ladys.one/providence-escorts>
29. ListCrawler
<https://escortalligator.com.listcrawler.eu/brief/escorts/usa/rhodeisland/providence/3>
30. LocalXList
<https://localxlist.org/p/united-states/rhode-island/rhode-island/categories/casual-dating/female-escorts/post-list>
31. McCoy's Guide
<https://www.mccoysguide.com/services/all/rhode-island>
32. My Escort Network
<https://providence.myescort.network/female-escorts/45>
33. OneBackPage
https://onebackpage.com/female-escorts_rhode-island-r782081/5
34. Private Tryst
<https://www.privatetryst.com/city/225>
35. Rubmaps
<https://rubmaps.city/rhode-island/>
36. Rubrankins
<https://rubrankings.com/united-states/rhode-island/providence/>
37. Secret Hostess
<https://secrethostess.com/category/escorts/country/usa/city/providence-ri/>
38. Sipsap
<https://sipsap.com/xadd/html2/rhode-island-escorts-1.html>
39. Skipthegames

- 40. https://skipthegames.com/posts/rhode-island_st/escorts
Slixia
- 41. <https://www.slixia.com/rhode-island/providence/>
Southern GFE
- 42. <https://www.southerngfe.com/escorts/rhode-island/providence>
Star Backpage
- 43. <https://providence.starbackpage.com>
Sweet Daddies
- 44. <https://sweefdaddies.com/locations/ri>
Sugar Babies
- 45. <https://sugarbabies.co/babies/rhode-island/>
Sugar Daddy
- 46. <https://www.sugardaddy.com/sugar-daddies/rhode-island>
SugarDaddyMeet
- 47. <https://www.sugardaddymeet.com/us/rhode-island>
Tryst
- 48. <https://tryst.link/us/escorts/rhode-island>
TS Escorts
- 49. <https://www.tsescorts.com/rhode-island/providence/shemale-escorts>
Woobs Escorts
- 50. <https://www.woobs.com/female-escorts/united-states/rhode-island>
XHamster
- 51. <https://xhamster.com/dating/us/ri?sort=activity>
XLamma
- 52. <https://xlamma.com/us/providence-ri-escorts#>
XNXX
- 53. <https://www.xnxx.com/search/real+whores+Providence+Rhode+Island+whore+prostitute>
YesBackpage
- 53. <https://www.yesbackpage.com/677/posts/8-Adult/122-Female-Escorts/>

Rhode Island Casual Sex, "Hookup" Websites

- 54. Age Match
<https://www.agematch.com/us>
- 55. American Sex Contacts
<https://www.americalsexcontacts.com/Sex-Contacts-Rhode-Island.php>
- 56. Anonymous Encounters
<https://www.anonymous-encounters.com/us/discreet-sex-rhode-island/>
- 57. Ashley Madison
https://www.ashleymadison.com/alt-esc-lp2/?offer_id=7&affiliate_id=89&affiliate_sub=calle&affiliate_click_id=w51vn48fsdq3pc6hjtcfjbcg&transaction_id=102a79548c18f4d67028be0d082776
- 58. BDSM Connex
<https://www.bdsmconnex.com/usa/providence-rhode-island/>
- 59. Best F*** Buddy
<https://www.static.bestfuckbuddy.com/RI>
- 60. Bindr
<https://www.bindr.dating/us-dating/rhode-island/fluid-dating>
- 61. Bisexual Playground
<https://www.bisexualplayground.com/browse/6884/Providence Rhode Island United States>
- 62. Book of Matches
https://www.bookofmatches.com/freedating/area/rhode_island-rhode_island-4.htm
- 63. Buddy Bate
<https://buddybate.com/category/location/providence-ri>
- 64. Busy Match
<https://www.busymatch.com/personals-US-RI>

65. Call Your Date
<https://callyourdate.com/land/sp/>
66. Casual Fling
<https://www.casual-fling.com/us/rhode-island>
67. Casual Hookup
<https://www.casualhookup.net/region/rhode-island/>
68. Cute Local Girls
<https://www.cutelocalgirls.com/RI/providence/1>
69. DateHookup
<https://datehookup.dating/single-women-ri-johnston.htm>
70. Do U Like
<https://www.doulike.com/usa/rhode-island/hookup.html>
71. DoubleList
<https://doublelist.com/city/providence/>
72. DoULike
<https://www.doulike.com/usa/rhode-island/personals.html>
73. Doublelist
<https://doublelist.com/city/providence/>
74. Easy Sex
<http://www.easysex.com/local-sex/united-states/rhode-island/providence/>
75. Ella Paradis
<https://ellaparadis.com/blogs/adult-sites/find-sex-in-rhode-island-women-looking-to-fuck?srltid=AfmBOoocNohQmNvHIGYbklhA3hxAyPTzqriTHBnGhfYwMZG9hIPf9RvE>
76. FindAF***Tonight
<https://us.findafucktonight.com/get-fucked-in-rhode-island.html>
77. Fling
<https://www.fling.com/local/rhode-island/>
78. Flirt Tendre
<https://flirtendre.com>
79. Get X Personal
<https://www.getxpersonal.com/ads/cranston-rhode-island>
80. Great Local Girls
<https://www.greatlocalgirls.com/RI>
81. Hookup Cloud
<http://www.hookupcloud.com/meet-singles/united-states/rhode-island/warwick/>
82. Hookups Society
<https://www.hookup-society.com/us/rhode-island-hookups/>
83. Hotel Introductions
<https://www.hotelintroductions.com/us/rhode-island/>
84. Lets Hang Out
<https://www.letshangout.com/dating/5224151/rhode-island/providence/single-women/>
85. Lets Meet Up
https://casual.letsmeetup.com/map/usa/rhode_island.html
86. Local Bang Club
<https://local-bangs.com/rhode-island/pawtucket.html>
87. Local BDSM Ads
https://playroom.sub-or-dom.com/map/usa/rhode_island.html
88. Locanto
<https://www.locanto.com/providence/Casual-Encounters/207/>
89. Love Awake
https://www.loveawake.com/free-online-dating/United-States/state-of-Rhode-Island.html?page=77#google_vignette
90. Mega Friends
<http://www.megafriends.com/secountry.php?location=48&sex=2>
91. Mega Personals

92. <https://themegapersonals.com>
My Bed or Yours
<https://mybedoryours.com/united-states/looking-for-sex-westerly--rhode-island/>
93. Online Booty Call
<https://www.onlinebootycall.com/local-dating/rhode-island/meet-singles-in-providence>
94. Online Local Girls
<https://www.onlinelocalgirls.com/RI/2>
95. My Bed of Yours
<https://mybedoryours.com/united-states/looking-for-sex-rhode-island/>
96. Nasty Hookups
<https://www.nastyhookups.com/rhode-island/hookup.html>
97. NSFWDog
<https://nsfwdog.com/kink/gloryhole/gloryhole-ri?dir=desc>
98. Plenty of Fish
<https://www.pof.com/dating/city/22373/rhodeisland/>
99. Real Casual Sex
<https://realcasualex.com/Rhode-Island.php>
100. Rocktie
<https://www.rocktie.com/us/ri>
101. Seeking Arrangements
<https://www.seeking.com>
102. Sex Log
<https://en-us.sexlog.com/swingers/rhode-island-block-island>
103. Sex on the Side
<https://www.sexontheside.com/browse/state,2,1,,RI,US,rhode-island-cheater-dating.html>
104. SDC
<https://www.sdc.com/rhode-island-swingers/providence-swingers-rhode-island.html>
105. Swing Towns
<https://www.swingtowns.com/st/casual-sex-dating/rhodeisland-eastprovidence.htm>
106. The Adult Hub
https://swingers.theadulthub.com/map/usa/rhode_island.html
107. Tinder
<https://tinder.com>
108. Who Fish
https://www.whofish.org/news/providence/ri/rhode_island_w4m_local_personals/2779.aspx
109. X Home Alone
<https://xhomealone.com/search/Tanya-MILF-Warwick-Rhode-Island/>

Rhode Island Webcams

110. Camwhore Next Door
<https://camwhorenexdoor.com/cam-whores/in/usa>
Camwhoresbay
<https://www.camwhoresbay.com/search/Rhode%20Island/>
111. Chaturbate
<https://totallyfreecam.com/chaturbate/?location=RHODE-ISLAND>
112. Cross Creek Ministries
<https://crosscreekministries.org/cranston-rhode-island-cam-girls/>
113. Erome
<https://www.erome.com/search?q=rhode+island+slut&o=new>
114. Find Cam Girls
<https://www.find-cam-girls.com/us/rhode-island-webcam-girls/>
115. Find Live Sex Rhode Island
<https://www.find-live-sex.com/us/rhode-island-sex-cams/>
116. My Teen Webcam
<https://myteenwebcam.com/cams/rhode-island/?location>

117. Omegle Chat
<https://omegle-chat.com/united-states/rhode-island/east-providence-chat-room>
118. Talk 2 Stranger
<https://talk2stranger.com/meetup/united-states/rhode-island>

Documenting Prostitution and Sex Trafficking Demand Reduction in Rhode Island

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Prostitution and sex trafficking are widespread throughout [Rhode Island](#), and its harms have been well documented. This brief report provides documentation about the most effective responses that have been implemented within the state, that not only respond to the problem but achieve true prevention.

The only evidence-based approaches to reducing the prevalence of the sex trade and reducing the level of harm are those that include a focus on the numbers and activity of consumers who provide the revenue supporting all sex trafficking, and who inflict the most harm on those who exploited in the illegal commercial sex and trafficking markets.

The evidence is overwhelming that reducing victimization, protecting public health, and ensuring that there are fewer crime victims requires deterring sex buyers, and penalizing those who are not deterred. The proven model that has been found ***to reduce prostitution activity, community calls for service to police, and sex buyer recidivism by 40% to 80%*** features:

- **Arresting** sex buyers
- **Sanctioning** arrested sex buyer (including fines and fees, seizing and forfeiting vehicles, public disclosure of identities)
- **Educating** sex buyers

The local history of implementing current laws against purchasing sex in Rhode Island demonstrates that ***there is already widespread need, willingness, and expertise necessary to combat consumer demand driving all sex trafficking and prostitution.***

In Rhode Island, more than ***78% of the population¹ lives in a community where at least one demand-reduction tactic has been used***, and where the local ***harms of prostitution and sex trafficking have been well-documented***. Demand reduction tactics have been used in ***22 of Rhode Island's communities***.

In this document, I have assembled information about the ***communities within Rhode Island that have implemented at least one of the key types of demand-reduction tactics***. Most commonly, this involves ***the arrest of sex buyers*** (either through ***investigations*** or ***sting operations***) and the ***public disclosure of their identities***. Some communities have also implemented ***educational programs*** for arrested sex buyers, ***public education*** efforts, ***vehicle seizures***, ***loss of employment***, and other tactics.

1. The key resource for documenting local demand reduction efforts is the [Demand Forum](#) website. Between January, 2012 and April, 2023 this website served as a repository for continuously updated information about demand reduction efforts throughout the United States. It contains documentation

¹ According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the state's population is 1,097,379, and 865,615 live within a city that has used demand reduction tactics. In Rhode Island, more than ***78.8% of the population lives in a community where at least one demand-reduction tactic has been used***.

about **2,697 cities and counties**. For each location in which anti demand tactics have been implemented, a separate webpage was produced and provided descriptions and links to source documents.

2. Demand Forum has not been updated since April 30, 2023, but throughout the U.S., cities and counties continue to be newly identified as having implemented demand reduction tactics, and previously identified sites continue to experience new events that should be documented. **Demand Forum currently lists 10 cities within Rhode Island**. That list is provided in the table below, and each site name is linked to its corresponding web page.
3. Since May 1, 2023, I have identified an **additional 12 cities within Rhode Island** that have arrested sex buyers. Each of those sites are also listed in the table below. After the table, in reverse chronological order I have pasted a description of the events curated from open sources for the additional cities, and have highlighted the portions making it clear that the subject was engaged in purchasing commercial sex, or commercial sexual abuse of minors.
4. In addition to continuing to identify new cities, I have also continued to **updated demand reduction activities within the previously-identified cities within Rhode Island**. That list of updated cities, along with links to source documents, is provided below. For a complete picture of what is known about demand reduction activity within this state, one must combine the offerings on Demand Forum with the updates and newly identified sites listed below.

Overview of Demand Reduction in 22 Rhode Island Cities

	Reverse Sting	Web Sting	Other Buyer Arrest	Buyer ID Disclosure	Buyer Employ. Loss	Cameras	Vehicle Seizure	Driver's License Suspension	Community Service	Public Education
Bristol				X						
Central Falls	X			X			X	X	X	
Charlestown				X						
Coventry	X	X	X	X						
Cranston	X	X		X						
Cumberland				X						
East Greenwich			X	X						
East Providence				X						
Johnston	X			X	X					
Middletown	X		X	X						
Narragansett				X						
Newport			X	X						
North Providence				X						
North Smithfield			X	X						
Pawtucket	X			X		X			X	
Portsmouth	X	X		X						
Providence	X	X	X	X					X	X
Tiverton				X						
Warwick	X	X	X	X						X
West Greenwich	X	X		X						
West Warwick				X						
Woonsocket	X			X		X				

12 Additions to the 10 Rhode Island Cities Listed in Demand Forum

Please Note:

- What follows the name of the city or county are **the types of demand reduction tactics** that have been used in the newly-identified site.
- The following descriptions are from a variety sources (mainly law-enforcement press releases and news reports) and are provided largely verbatim from the originals. **Please be aware that terminology is used inconsistently and in many instances is not what we would consider ideal or acceptable to use** (e.g., “sex worker,” “prostitute,” “child prostitution,” child pornography”). What is provided below is simply raw material meant to be used as a source of intel, and a starting point for any documentation that may be public-facing or for presentation to legislators. **The material should be edited heavily before any public distribution.**
- **What is provided below is not equivalent to what would be provided on a city/county-level web page for Demand Forum.** Those pages provide a description of each site and where it is located, a narrative about the documented prostitution and sex trafficking problems leading the community to combat demand, an overview of all the various tactics that have been used, and a list of key partners involved in implementation. Below, all we have provided is simply a rough draft of the narrative for the application of demand reduction tactics that led us to “count” the site.
- What immediately follows the descriptive paragraphs are the links to original sources for the current case described. In some instances, there are **subheadings** in bold for either **background** materials for that site about the local sexual exploitation problem, or for sources about other cases of **demand reduction tactics** used.
- The newly-identified (after April 30, 2023) sites are listed in reverse chronological order below.

Portsmouth, RI web based reverse sting, ID disclosure

In July, 2024, three people were arrested in Portsmouth after a sting operation targeting sex trafficking, police said. Portsmouth police said two of the men arrested were involved in targeting children for sex. Police said they first arrested Duarte Arruda, 61, of Fall River, Massachusetts, and Lee Berry, 41, of Delray Beach, Florida. According to police, their arrests stemmed from an undercover operation aim at identifying people using websites to meet with children for sex acts. Police said Arruda and Berry traveled to Portsmouth to engage in sex acts with a child. Both men were charged with **patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity** and indecent solicitation of a minor. Police said the third man was arrested during the sting operation after he tried to **pay for sex** with an adult. Officers identified the man as Damon Teixeira, 31, of Fall River. He was charged with procurement of sexual conduct for a fee (first offense). Arruda and Berry are scheduled to be arraigned Thursday in Newport County District Court. Teixeira is scheduled to appear in court on Aug. 1.

- <https://turnto10.com/news/local/portsmouth-rhode-island-police-detectives-three-charged-sex-trafficking-investigation-child-adults-fall-river-massachusetts-delray-beach-florida-websites-online-homeland-security-warwick-july-22-2024> (2024)
- <https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/east-bay/2-men-charged-with-targeting-minors-for-sex-in-portsmouth/> (2023)

- <https://turnto10.com/news/local/gallery/portsmouth-rhode-island-police-detectives-three-charged-sex-trafficking-investigation-child-adults-fall-river-massachusetts-delray-beach-florida-websites-online-homeland-security-warwick-july-22-2024?photo=1> (2024)
- <https://patch.com/rhode-island/portsmouth/3-men-arrested-sex-trafficking-sting-portsmouth-police> (2024)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XePQuWVRIA> (2024)
- <https://whatsupnewp.com/2024/07/portsmouth-police-charge-three-in-joint-sting-operation-targeting-sex-trafficking/> (2024)
- <https://www.abc6.com/three-men-charged-in-portsmouth-sex-trafficking-sting/> (2024)
- <https://fallriverreporter.com/fall-river-and-florida-men-arrested-in-alleged-portsmouth-sex-trafficking-sting-two-for-minor/> (2024)
- <https://www.newportdispatch.com/2024/07/23/portsmouth-police-arrest-three-in-sex-trafficking-sting/> (2024)
- <https://www.thenewportbuzz.com/portsmouth-undercover-operation-snags-two-men-in-child-sex-crime-crackdown/50218> (2024)
- <https://newsradiori.heart.com/content/2024-07-23-three-men-charged-with-allegedly-enticing-a-child/> (2024)

East Providence, RI sex buyer ID disclosure

In April, 2024, Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha today announced that six individuals have been charged in Third Division District Court in Warwick with crimes related to **targeting children for sex**, stemming from a joint investigation led by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Warwick Police Department, the Rhode Island State Police (RISP), and the Office of the Attorney General. Arrested during this operation was Abudulganiyu O. Adebeye (32-2024-02227, age 29) of East Providence is charged with one count of **patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity** and one count of indecent solicitation of a child. On April 4 and April 5, 2024, members of the Warwick Police Department and the Rhode Island State Police Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) arrested six defendants following an undercover operation aimed at identifying those utilizing websites and online platforms to meet and engage with minors for sexual activity. Investigators placed decoy advertisements on websites known to be associated with **prostitution and commercial sex**. It is alleged that the defendants responded to a location in Warwick intending to engage in sexual activity with a minor. The investigation was led by HSI New England Field Office for Rhode Island, the Warwick Police Department, the Rhode Island State Police, and the Office of the Attorney General and assisted by the Portsmouth Police Department, Providence Police Department, East Providence Police Department, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) New England, and the U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS).

- <https://riag.ri.gov/press-releases/six-charged-joint-state-and-federal-sting-operation-targeting-child-sex-trafficking> (2024)

In September, 2017, three police departments joined together to execute a prostitution sting that led to the arrest of more than a dozen **male sex buyers**. Among those arrested was Albert Crawford, 66, of East Providence. Members of the Pawtucket Police Department, the Central Falls Police Department and members of Cranston Police Department's vice unit arrested 15 people on in a sting executed to address sex-trafficking in two neighborhoods in those cities. During the all-day sting female police officers from Central Falls, Pawtucket and Cranston posed as prostitutes and were placed in high traffic areas of Dexter and Broad Streets. Pawtucket police arrested one person for loitering for prostitution and eight people for **attempting to participate in sexual conduct for a fee**. Central Falls arrested a total of seven people for attempting to procure sexual conduct for a fee. All those arrested were arraigned in front of a District Court bail commissioner and will appear in court on September 20.

- <https://turnto10.com/news/local/prostitution-sting-leads-to-15-arrests-in-two-cities> (2017)
- <https://www.abc6.com/sixteen-arrested-during-prostitution-sting-in-central-falls-pawtucket/> (2017)

In May, 2015, an East Providence man was arrested in a sting operation in Central Falls targeting sex buyers in search of prostitutes. Peter Lust, 35, was one of 10 men arrested for allegedly **soliciting sex from an undercover officer posing as a prostitute**. The sting focused in high traffic areas, Central Falls police said in a release. The identities of all ten men were listed in press releases.

- <https://patch.com/rhode-island/eastprovidence/ep-man-named-lust-arrested-soliciting-undercover-cop> (2015)
- **Background on local sex trade harms:**<https://www.wpri.com/news/cranston-couple-charged-with-forcing-woman-into-prostitution/> (2015)
<https://warwickonline.com/stories/police-woman-kidnapped-forced-into-prostitution-by-cranston-couple,99970> (2015)
https://www.ri.gov/press/view/25831?sm_guid=NTE4OTExfDU5NTUyNTUwfC0xfHBibGF0dG5lckBob3RtYWlsLmNvbXw1NDQ1OTI3fHwwfDB8MTE5ODU2ODU3fDEwNTZ8MHwwfHw1MDg1ODV8MA2 (2015)
<https://patch.com/rhode-island/eastprovidence/second-ri-teen-sentenced-sex-trafficking-underage-girls> (2015)
https://www.thesunchronicle.com/news/local_news/east-providence-man-pleads-guilty-in-federal-court-to-sex-trafficking-at-motels-in-seekonk/article_3cb38fbe-1722-11e6-bfd7-ff64571d128e.html (2016)
- <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ri/pr/sex-trafficker-sentenced-10-years-prison> (2016)
- <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ri/pr/guilty-plea-sex-trafficking-conspiracy> (2016)
- <https://turnto10.com/news/local/east-providence-man-admits-to-role-in-sex-trafficking-ring> (2016)
- <https://reportertoday.com/eastprovidence/stories/show-cause-hearing-january-23rd-to-shut-down-rumford-motel,43639> (2023)

Charlestown, RI sex buyer ID disclosure

In April, 2024, Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha today announced that six individuals – including a man from Charlestown - were charged in Third Division District Court in Warwick with crimes related to targeting children for sex, stemming from a joint investigation led by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Warwick Police Department, the Rhode Island State Police (RISP), and the Office of the Attorney General. Arrested during this operation was Randy M. Joslin III, 27, of Charlestown, who was charged with one count of **patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity** and one count of indecent solicitation of a child. On April 4 and April 5, 2024, members of the Warwick Police Department and the Rhode Island State Police Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) arrested six defendants following an undercover operation aimed at identifying those utilizing websites and online platforms to meet and engage with minors for sexual activity. Investigators placed decoy advertisements on websites known to be associated with prostitution and commercial sex. It is alleged that the defendants responded to a location in Warwick intending to engage in sexual activity with a minor. The investigation was led by HSI New England Field Office for Rhode Island, the Warwick Police Department, the Rhode Island State Police, and the Office of the Attorney General and assisted by the Portsmouth Police Department, Providence Police Department, East Providence Police Department, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) New England, and the U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS).

- <https://riag.ri.gov/press-releases/six-charged-joint-state-and-federal-sting-operation-targeting-child-sex-trafficking> (2024)
- <https://www.abc6.com/six-charged-in-sex-trafficking-targeting-sting-operation/> (2024)
- <https://turnto10.com/news/local/rhode-island-authorities-charge-six-after-sting-operation-targeting-child-sex-trafficking-warwick-police-state-homeland-security-minors-sexual-activity-april-10-2024> (2024)
- <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/11/metro/six-arrested-ri-charges-child-sex-trafficking-after-sting-operation/> (2024)

- **Background:** <https://local12.com/news/local/2-charged-after-2-businesses-and-1-home-raided-in-clermont-county-prostitution-sting-cincinnati-pierce-township-buqian-deng-natura-foot-spa-yilin-comfort-zone-massage-yaling-wang> (2016)
- <https://turnto10.com/news/local/ri-man-sentenced-to-federal-prison-for-conspiring-to-transport-minors-for-sex-trafficking> (2016)
- https://www.thesunchronicle.com/news/local_news/east-providence-man-pleads-guilty-in-federal-court-to-sex-trafficking-at-motels-in-seekonk/article_3cb38fbe-1722-11e6-bfd7-ff64571d128e.html (2016)

Newport, RI sex buyer arrest, ID disclosure

In April, 2024, a Newport man was facing federal charges after enticing a child to engage in sex acts and being caught with child pornography, U.S. Attorney Zachary Cunha said. Kyle Patrick Tormey, 39, was charged with enticement of an individual less than eighteen years of age to engage in sexual activity, receipt of child pornography, and possession of child pornography. He was ordered detained Friday after his appearance in U.S. District Court in Providence. According to charging documents, Tormey repeatedly messaged an underage girl on social media and convinced her to send him photos of herself and engage in sex acts. In late December, Tormey and his victim had a sexual encounter in his van, and he gave her \$200 in cash after, prosecutors said. Prosecutors said police got a search warrant and discovered photos of the victim, several of which she was naked in. The photos were stored in social media accounts belonging to Tormey, according to prosecutors. Prosecutors said they also found child pornography images of other children.

- <https://patch.com/rhode-island/newport/newport-man-accused-enticing-minor-sex-possessing-child-porn> (2024)
- <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ri/pr/newport-man-detained-federal-charge-child-enticement> (2024)

In September, 2011, a Rhode Island man was sentenced to 72 months in federal prison followed by lifetime supervised release for receiving and possessing more than 1,100 images and videos of child pornography. The case was investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the Rhode Island State Police. Thomas O'Brien, 51, was also ordered by U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith to continue an earlier court order that he post signs warning that minors are prohibited from entering his Newport dive shop business without adult supervision. O'Brien pleaded guilty in March 2011. According to court records, in August 2008, based on information provided by Canadian law enforcement authorities to the Rhode Island State Police Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, investigators were led to a teen modeling website that facilitated meetings between child pornography collectors and O'Brien. On Aug. 18, 2008, O'Brien consented to a search of his home and a forensic preview of digital media including his home computers. On Aug. 20, 2008, authorities searched digital media belonging to O'Brien which revealed more than 1,100 images and videos of child pornography. During voluntary interviews with investigators, O'Brien described a relationship through an Internet chat room with a minor who lived in Kansas City, Mo., which began in June 2005. O'Brien admitted to sending cash to the minor and providing a webcam which was used to provide him with pornographic pictures and videos of the victim and a friend. O'Brien was arrested in September 2010 and released on \$50,000 unsecured bond. At the time of his initial court appearance, and as a condition of bail, O'Brien was ordered by the court to have no contact with minors, including at his business. The court ordered O'Brien to post signs that prohibited minors from entering his business establishment without an adult. Investigations such as this are conducted as part of Operation Predator, a nationwide ICE initiative to protect children from sexual predators, including those who travel overseas for sex with minors, Internet child pornographers, criminal alien sex offenders, and child sex traffickers.

- <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/rhode-island-man-sentenced-6-years-child-pornography-charges> (2011)
- **Background on local sex trade harms:** <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ri/pr/sex-trafficker-sentenced-10-years-prison> (2016)
- <https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/providence/day-one-sex-trafficking-a-huge-problem-in-ri/> (2019)

- <https://www.golocalprov.com/news/jeffrey-epsteins-ri-ties-in-focus-magaziner-newport-super-yacht-and-brown> (2024)

West Warwick, RI sex buyer ID disclosure

In April, 2024, Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha today announced that six individuals (including one from West Warwick) had been with crimes related to **targeting children for paid sex**, stemming from a joint investigation led by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Warwick Police Department, the Rhode Island State Police (RISP), and the Office of the Attorney General. Arrested during this operation was Luis J. Chacon (Case number: 32-2024-02219, age 30) of West Warwick who was charged with one count of **patronizing a minor for commercial sexual activity and one count of indecent solicitation of a child**. On April 4 and April 5, 2024, members of the Warwick Police Department and the Rhode Island State Police Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) arrested six defendants following an undercover operation aimed at identifying those utilizing websites and online platforms to meet and engage with minors for sexual activity. Investigators placed decoy advertisements on websites known to be associated with **prostitution and commercial sex**. It is alleged that the defendants responded to a location in Warwick intending to engage in sexual activity with a minor. The investigation was led by HSI New England Field Office for Rhode Island, the Warwick Police Department, the Rhode Island State Police, and the Office of the Attorney General and assisted by the Portsmouth Police Department, Providence Police Department, East Providence Police Department, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) New England, and the U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS).

- <https://riag.ri.gov/press-releases/six-charged-joint-state-and-federal-sting-operation-targeting-child-sex-trafficking> (2024)
- <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/11/metro/six-arrested-ri-charges-child-sex-trafficking-after-sting-operation/> (2024)
- <https://www.abc6.com/six-charged-in-sex-trafficking-targeting-sting-operation/> (2024)
- **Background on local sex trade harms:** <https://www.wpri.com/news/3-spa-workers-face-prostitution-related-charges/> (2015)
- <https://www.abc6.com/prostitution-related-arrests-at-west-warwick-spa/> (2015)
- <https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/> (2015)

Cumberland, RI sex buyer ID disclosure

In January, 2022, Chief Gregory Gilmore reported that the Blackstone (MA) Police Department charged three individuals in connection with an ongoing **prostitution solicitation** investigation, including a man from Cumberland, RI: John Flanagan, age 60, was arrested and charged with **Sexual Conduct for a Fee**. On, Dec. 30, 2021, the Blackstone Police Department in cooperation with the Blackstone Valley Drug and Counter Crimes Task Force, arrested three subjects following an investigation and subsequent operation that focused on the alleged **solicitation of sexual conduct in exchange for cash via social media**. The investigation was initiated after Blackstone Police detectives developed information regarding alleged prostitution solicitation from a previous case. The three individuals were arraigned in Uxbridge District Court on Dec. 30 and were released on personal recognizance. A fourth suspect was also charged, but charges were dismissed on Dec. 31 by an Uxbridge District Court judge following arraignment.

- <https://blackstonepolice.org/2022/01/05/blackstone-police-charge-three-in-connection-with-ongoing-prostitution-solicitation-investigation/> (2022)

In March, 2016, a Cumberland man was one of 11 people arrested in Seekonk in a human trafficking sting. Detectives with the Somerset and Swansea police departments were part of a team operating under the auspices of the Human Trafficking Task Force of Rhode Island and the Southeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council Detectives Anti-Crime Unit that arrested the 11 men in Seekonk on charges of **seeking sex for a fee**. The 11 men responded to advertisements on social media posted by the task force, only to find undercover

officers waiting for them at a designated location. Those charged with engaging in sexual conduct for a fee included Arthur Amaral, 43, 153 Morris St., Cumberland R.I.

- <https://www.tauntongazette.com/story/news/2016/03/24/11-men-one-from-taunton/64588567007/> (2016)

In February, 2016, police announced the arrest of 13 men following a joint sting operation targeting online prostitution. According to a statement from Cranston Chief of Police Col. Michael Winquist, detectives and agents focused the operation on “attacking the demand side of prostitution” – those responding to advertisements posted by escorts on Backpage.com. Undercover detectives are said to have posed as prostitutes on the website, drawing responses soliciting sex. Among those charged with procurement of sexual conduct for a fee were Jason McWilliams, 42, of 70 Grandview Drive in Cumberland.

- <https://warwickonline.com/stories/13-arrested-in-paid-sex-sting.109131> (2016)
- <https://www.tauntongazette.com/story/news/2016/02/04/thirteen-men-one-from-rehoboth/64463879007/> (2016)
- <https://patch.com/massachusetts/milford-ma/milford-john-among-13-arrested-backpagecom-prostitution-sting-ri> (2016)

In September, 2013, Central Falls Police staged a successful “John Sting” in response to reported high-traffic prostitution areas throughout the city. Two undercover female officers from outside agencies posed as prostitutes in the chosen areas. In only four hours, the women were solicited by numerous people, and officers made a total of 7 arrests. The identities of the 7 men who were charged with soliciting from a motor vehicle for indecent purposes included Ramiro Martins (57) of Cumberland.

- <https://www.abc6.com/seven-men-arrested-in-central-falls-prostitution-sting/> (2013)

Tiverton, RI sex buyer ID disclosure

In October, 2019, Fall River, MA police arrested 10 men – including one from Tiverton - who allegedly solicited prostitution from an undercover officer. The men were arrested during a so-called “John Sting” that unfolded in the area of Cash and Pleasant streets over four hours beginning at 7 p.m., Detective John Robinson said in a statement. The undercover operation was carried out by the Fall River Police Department’s Vice & Intelligence Unit, and came in response to complaints area residents and businesses lodged about prostitution in the area, Robinson said. The men arrested included Robert M. Michaud, 48, last known address 35 Carpenter St., Tiverton.

- <https://www.newportri.com/story/news/local/2019/10/09/tiverton-little-compton-men-arrested-in-john-sting/2573070007/> (2019)
- <https://fallriverreporter.com/ten-men-arrested-in-fall-river-prostitution-sting/> (2019)

In August, 2018, nine men faced charges after allegedly attempting to solicit an undercover officer for sex. According to police, members of the Fall River, MA Vice & Intelligence Unit, with assistance from the Major Crimes and Special Operations Divisions, conducted an undercover operation in the areas of North Main and Pine streets, and South Main and Park streets following complaints from citizens and businesses about prostitution. Arrested individuals included Luis Costa, 55, last listed address 41 Mathias Ave., Tiverton. All nine were charged with paying for sexual conduct.

- <https://www.heraldnews.com/story/news/crime/2018/08/01/nine-arrested-in-john-sting/11177593007/>

In October, 2014, Fall River police arrested six alleged male sex buyers – including two from Tiverton - during a prostitution sting on North Main Street. The undercover operation was the second in three months at the area of North Main and Pine streets, where businesses and residents have been complaining about rampant prostitution, according to court records. Police officers have made several prostitution-related arrests in that area, which is frequented by prostitutes and men driving through looking to solicit them, police said. Between 6 and 9 p.m., two undercover female police officers stood at the corner of North Main and Pine streets and reported being approached by men in vehicles who offered them money in exchange for sex acts. After the propositions were made, the undercover officers signaled to backup officers driving marked cruisers, who then

pulled over the suspects, according to court documents. Fall River police arrests logs indicate that the following individuals were arrested and charged with providing payment for sexual conduct, including Larry H. Miranda, 60, and Walter E. Neuman, 71, both of Tiverton. The operation was also the third prostitution sting since June, when detectives arrested six women after conducting a prostitution sting in the Flint, Corky Row, Lower Highlands and the North End, according to police reports. In July, Fall River police arrested six alleged johns and two women during a prostitution sting on North Main Street. The stings were prompted by several neighborhood complaints of drug dealing and prostitution, according to court documents.

- <https://www.heraldnews.com/story/news/crime/2014/10/08/fall-river-police-arrest-6/36225612007/> (2014)
- **Background on local sex trade harms:** https://fallriverreporter.com/tiverton-police-arrest-man-on-sex-trafficking-charges-in-operation-that-arrests-120-traffickers/#google_vignette (2017)
- <https://fun107.com/nationwide-sex-trafficking-sting-lands-in-tiverton/> (2017)
- <https://www.wpri.com/news/crime/police-locate-human-trafficking-suspect-minor-in-tiverton/> (2017)
- <https://turnto10.com/news/local/tiverton-police-arrest-man-accused-of-sex-trafficking> (2017)
- <https://www.boston.com/news/local-news/2017/10/25/boston-man-charged-with-sex-trafficking-in-fbi-probe/> (2017)
- <https://www.thenewportbuzz.com/tiverton-police-arrest-registered-sex-offender-for-third-degree-sexual-assault-on-15-year-old-girl/44304> (2023)

Bristol, RI sex buyer ID disclosure

In July, 2018, a dozen men – including two from Bristol, RI - were arrested in a five-hour span after officials set up a prostitution sting in Fall River, police said. In response to numerous citizen and business complaints regarding prostitution activity in the areas of North Main and Pine streets and South Main and Park streets, members of the Fall River Police Department's Vice & Intelligence Unit arranged for a sting operation involving a female undercover police officer. The operation resulted in the arrest of 12 men between the hours of 6:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. on Friday, June 29. The men arrested on a charge of offering sexual conduct for pay included : Leonard Zachery, 27, and Zikret Hasan, 69, both of Bristol, Rhode Island.

- <https://whdh.com/news/12-men-nabbed-in-fall-river-prostitution-sting/> (2018)

In March, 2016, a Bristol man was one of 11 arrested in Seekonk, MA in a human trafficking sting. Detectives with the Somerset and Swansea police departments were part of a team operating under the auspices of the Human Trafficking Task Force of Rhode Island and the Southeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council Detectives Anti-Crime Unit that arrested the 11 men in Seekonk on charges of seeking sex for a fee. The 11 men responded to advertisements on social media posted by the task force, only to find undercover officers waiting for them at a designated location. Those charged with engaging in sexual conduct for a fee included Walter Lopes, 54, 147 Bay View Ave. Bristol, R.I.

- <https://www.tauntingazette.com/story/news/2016/03/24/11-men-one-from-taunton/64588567007/> (2016)
- <https://patch.com/rhode-island/cranston/ri-men-busted-seeking-sex-seekonk-police-0> (2016)

In September, 2015, the Providence Police department continued its ongoing "Operation Backpage" undercover sting operation, and the city announced seven more men – including two from Bristol, RI - arrested over the course of one day. Undercover police officers masqueraded as women on the classified ads site Backpage.com, and on Sept. 25, seven men solicited the women for sex, arranging to meet the men at a local hotel, where they were arrested and charged with procurement of sexual conduct for a fee. The men were due to be arraigned at Sixth District Court on Oct. 13 and included Michael Sadler, age 33, Bristol, and Orion Wellinghurst, 28, Bristol. "Operation Backpage" has led to the arrest of 42 individuals since March 2015, the police said in a news release.

- <https://www.wpri.com/news/prov-police-arrest-7-men-in-prostitution-sting/> (2015)

East Greenwich, RI sex buyer arrest, ID disclosure

In May, 2016, Lewis Valenti, 41, a West Kingston, R.I., businessman with residences in Reading, Mass., and East Greenwich, R.I., made an initial appearance in U.S. District Court in Providence today on a criminal complaint charging him with conspiracy to transport a minor interstate for prostitution and transporting a minor interstate for prostitution. U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge Lincoln D. Almond ordered Valenti released on \$50,000 unsecured bond to home confinement at his Massachusetts residence, with electronic monitoring. Earlier that month, Kedwin Vargas, 25, and Rene A. Laureano, 30, of Roxbury, Mass., were arrested and ordered detained in this matter. Vargas and Laureano are charged by way of federal criminal complaints with conspiracy to transport a minor interstate for prostitution and transporting a **minor interstate for prostitution**. The charges against Valenti, Vargas and Laureano are announced by United States Attorney Peter F. Neronha, Harold H. Shaw, Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Field Office of the FBI, and Colonel Steven G. O'Donnell, Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police. According to court documents, it is alleged that in March 2016, Lewis Valenti contacted Rhode Island State Police and alleged that Kedwin Vargas was attempting to extort him by threatening to provide a video and audio recording to his family which contained information regarding **sexual encounters he allegedly had with a minor female in exchange for payment**. An investigation by Rhode Island State Police and the FBI revealed numerous text messages and cell phone conversations between Vargas and others with Lewis, in which it is alleged that Vargas is identified as the person allegedly attempting to extort \$10,000 in cash from Valenti. According to court documents, the investigation revealed that more than a year ago, Vargas allegedly began posting ads on backpage.com offering a minor female for prostitution. It is alleged that on numerous occasions, Laureano, who was previously employed at Valenti's agriculture business in West Kingston, R.I., would drive the female to meet with customers, including Valenti. It is alleged in court documents that Valenti admitted to investigators that he had **sexual contact with the female on numerous occasions over the past two years at his East Greenwich apartment and at several local hotels**. A criminal complaint is merely an allegation and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. The cases are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney William J. Ferland. The Warwick, R.I., and Boston Police Departments assisted the FBI and Rhode Island State Police in the investigation of this matter.

- <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ri/pr/businessman-charged-sex-trafficking-minor> (2016)
- <https://www.wpri.com/news/sex-trafficking-case-involving-minor-moves-forward-after-plea-agreement/> (2016)
- <https://turnto10.com/news/local/businessman-charged-with-sex-trafficking-alleges-he-was-blackmailed> (2016)
- <https://www.ksl.com/article/40004796/lettuce-company-boss-charged-with-sex-trafficking-teen-girl?comments=true> (2016)
- <https://apnews.com/national-national-general-news-c00cb759c82c4aaebfde96777e18217d> (2016)
- <https://www.boston.com/news/crime/2016/05/31/atlantic-produce-ceo-charged-sex-trafficking-minor/> (2016)
- <https://patch.com/rhode-island/narragansett/local-businessman-charged-sex-trafficking-minor-0> (2016)

North Providence, RI sex buyer ID disclosure

In February, 2016, Cranston police announced the arrest of 13 men following a joint sting operation targeting online prostitution. According to a statement from Chief of Police Col. Michael Winquist, detectives and agents set up "at an undisclosed location in Cranston" on Jan. 29. The statement indicates the focus of the operation was on "**attacking the demand side of prostitution**" – those responding to advertisements posted by escorts on Backpage.com. Undercover detectives are said to have **posed as prostitutes** on the website, drawing responses soliciting sex. Among those charged with **procurement of sexual conduct for a fee** were three Johnston residents: Kyle Gravel, 22, of 394 George Waterman Road; Douglas Carpenter, 61, of 10 Woodlake Drive;

Jason Hiatt, 39, of 2732 Hartford Ave. Other Rhode Island residents facing the same charge were from Cumberland, Providence, and Richmond. Louis Parente, 52, of 2 Woodhaven Boulevard in North Providence; Jason McWilliams, 42, of 70 Grandview Drive in Cumberland; Dina Seng, 45, of 209 Wendell St. in Providence; and Andrew DeSilva, 25, 9 Oakland Road, in Richmond.

- <https://warwickonline.com/stories/13-arrested-in-paid-sex-sting,109131> (2016)
- <https://www.tauntongazette.com/story/news/2016/02/04/thirteen-men-one-from-rehoboth/64463879007/> (2016)
- <https://patch.com/massachusetts/milford-ma/milford-john-among-13-arrested-backpagecom-prostitution-sting-ri> (2016)
- **Background on local sex trade harms:** <https://www.susantperkins.com/north-providence-man-charged-with-sex-trafficking/> (2015)
- <https://www.wpri.com/news/several-arrested-in-warwick-prostitution-sting/> (2019)
- <https://www.golocalprov.com/news/fbi-providence-north-providence-police-raid-stores-home-in-possible-prostit> (2021)

Narragansett, RI sex buyer ID disclosure

In May, 2015, Andrew Byrnes, 77, of Narragansett, was arrested by police as part of a sting focusing on prostitution. The operation centered in “high traffic areas” of Central Falls. Byrnes was one of 10 men arrested for **soliciting sex from undercover officers posing as prostituted women**.

- <https://patch.com/rhode-island/narragansett/narragansett-man-charged-central-falls-prostitution-sting> (2015)
- **Background on local sex trade harms:** <https://www.ri.gov/press/view/25831> (2015)
- <https://www.ri.gov/press/view/26185> (2015)
- <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ri/pr/sex-trafficker-sentenced-10-years-prison> (2016)
- <https://warwickpost.com/four-warwick-men-arrested-in-cranston-prostitution-sting/> (2016)
- <https://www.golocalprov.com/news/e.-providence-man-gets-10-years-in-federal-prison-for-sex-trafficking-minor> (2016)
- <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/08/05/metro/narragansett-short-term-rental-ordinance/> (2024)

North Smithfield, RI sex buyer arrest, ID disclosure

In May, 2014, three arrests were made by North Smithfield Police for prostitution offenses. Arrested was Kristen Brownly-Stephenson, 29, of North Smithfield, on one count of prostitution; Karl Ikerman, 73, of Cumberland, was charged with one count of **procurement of sexual acts in exchange for money**; and Jennifer Gilmore, 36, of North Smithfield was charged for permitting prostitution. Each individual was charged and summoned to appear in court at a later date.

- <https://www.abc6.com/prostitution-in-north-smithfield/> (2014)

Updates for Rhode Island Cities and Counties Listed in Demand Forum

Please Note:

- After the name of city or county, we list the type of update encountered: new evidence of a demand reduction tactic used, or background information about the nature of the local commercial sexual exploitation or sex trafficking problem leading the community to address demand.
 - **Red text** indicates an update to a previously-identified city or county where the use of additional demand reduction tactics has been found
-

Central Falls, RI reverse sting, background

- <https://www.wpri.com/news/police-bust-prostitution-ring-in-pawtucket-area/>
- <https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2024/08/19/protect-people-in-the-sex-trade-not-those-who-buy-them/> (2024)
- **ID disclosure:** <https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/five-arrested-in-fall-river-child-sex-exploitation-operation/3658536/> (2025)
- <https://www.newportdispatch.com/2025/03/13/man-arrested-in-fall-river-child-sex-sting-operation/> (2025)
- <https://wbsm.com/fall-river-child-sex-arrests/> (2025)
- <https://www.heraldnews.com/story/news/crime/2025/03/13/police-under-age-sex-sting-nets-5-including-2-fall-river-men/82375253007/> (2025)
- <https://fallriverreporter.com/fall-river-rochester-and-rhode-island-men-arrested-in-underage-commercialized-sex-sting-by-frpd-massachusetts-state-police-2/> (2025)
- <https://turnto10.com/news/local/5-arrested-after-undercover-operation-to-combat-sexual-exploitation-of-children-minors-commercial-sex-fake-online-ad-teen-state-police-march-13-2025> (2025)

Coventry, RI background; add sex buyer arrest

- <https://whatsupnewp.com/2024/09/portsmouth-police-arrest-coventry-man-on-charges-of-soliciting-a-minor/> (2024)
- <https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/east-bay/coventry-man-charged-with-soliciting-a-minor/> (2024)
- **sex buyer arrest:** <https://www.ri.gov/press/view/17045> (2012)

Cranston, RI background

- <https://patch.com/rhode-island/cranston/cranston-police-officer-receives-u-s-investigative-excellence-award> (2023)
- <https://www.golocalprov.com/news/sin-city-cranston-officials-tied-to-drugs-sexual-assaults-vandalism-and-pro> (2023)
- <https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2024/08/19/protect-people-in-the-sex-trade-not-those-who-buy-them/> (2024)
- <https://www.golocalprov.com/news/unsealed-indictment-charges-6-for-sex-trafficking-in-ri-ma-and-sc> (2024)

Johnston, RI background

- <https://ecode360.com/9720702>
- <https://ecode360.com/9723729> (2023)

Pawtucket, RI reverse sting, background

- <https://www.wpri.com/news/police-bust-prostitution-ring-in-pawtucket-area/>
- <https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2024/08/19/protect-people-in-the-sex-trade-not-those-who-buy-them/> (2024)
- <https://www.golocalprov.com/news/unsealed-indictment-charges-6-for-sex-trafficking-in-ri-ma-and-sc> (2024)

Providence, RI background; web based reverse sting, ID disclosure; add sex buyer arrest, public education

- <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1984/04/29/Rhode-Island-state-police-said-Sunday-they-are-ready/5517452062800/> (1984)
- <https://www.wpri.com/news/cops-fight-over-prostitute-may-have-prompted-providence-murder/> (2016)
- <https://turnto10.com/news/local/suspect-arrested-in-providence-stabbing-death> (2016)
- <https://upriseri.com/ri-commission-proposes-sweeping-reforms-in-laws-affecting-sex-workers/> (2023)
- https://www.thesunchronicle.com/news/local_news/boston-man-convicted-of-sex-trafficking-girls-at-seekonk-motels-gets-up-to-80-years/article_6f44e7ef-a479-5b57-9ef5-5513f8b20289.html
- <https://warwickonline.com/stories/guest-opinion-lobbyists-advocate-for-prostitution-in-rhode-island,253403> (2024)
- <https://johnstonsunrise.net/stories/guest-opinion-lobbyists-advocate-for-prostitution-in-rhode-island,253403> (2024)
- <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/lowell-man-charged-sex-trafficking-and-transporting-victim-through-four-states> (2024)
- <https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2024/08/19/protect-people-in-the-sex-trade-not-those-who-buy-them/> (2024)
- <https://www.golocalprov.com/news/unsealed-indictment-charges-6-for-sex-trafficking-in-ri-ma-and-sc> (2024)
- <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/opinion/columns/2024/05/18/promoting-efforts-that-create-windfalls-for-exploiters-is-the-opposite-of-progressive-policy/73343506007/> (2024)
- <https://www.golocalprov.com/news/ri-high-school-student-facing-2-felony-sex-charges-arrested-by-ice> (2025)
- <https://www.abc6.com/ri-house-to-discuss-bill-to-allay-penalties-in-prostitution-cases/> (2025)
- <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/06/03/metro/ri-house-judiciary-vote-h7167-sex-workers-immunity-prostitution-trafficking/> (2025)
- <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/crime/2025/03/20/billboard-targets-sex-trafficking-in-providence-during-march-madness/82570338007/> (2025)
- **Web based reverse sting, ID disclosure:** <https://www.dhs.gov/hsi/news/2024/07/10/rhode-island-man-admits-travel-intent-engage-illicit-sexual-conduct-after-hsj> (2024)
- **Add sex buyer arrest:** <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/rhode-island-man-indicted-sex-trafficking-child-pornography-and-witness-tampering> (2015)
- **Add Public education:** <https://rights4girls.org/marchmadness/> (2026)
- <https://www.aol.com/news/sex-buying-isn-t-game-023855507.html> (2026)
- <https://www.facebook.com/rights4girls/posts/this-week-we-launched-another-leg-of-our-sex-buying-isnt-a-game-national-billboa/1367058712130026/> (2026)
- <https://www.facebook.com/rights4girls/photos/we-cant-afford-to-overlook-the-staggering-rates-of-exploitation-among-homeless-y/1355623556606875/> (2026)

Warwick, RI web based reverse sting, add ID disclosure; add sex buyer arrest, public education

- <https://www.wcvb.com/article/sex-trafficking-16-year-old-girl-boston-arrest-federal-charges/45865286> (2023)
- <https://cnycentral.com/news/nation-world/boston-man-accused-of-recruiting-16-year-old-girl-for-prostitution-prosecutors-say-sex-trafficking-massachusetts-rhode-island-tramonte-jamier-queen-sex-trafficking-criminal-sexual-activity> (2023)
- <https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/man-recruited-teen-girl-into-selling-sex-including-in-moms-boston-basement-feds/3193907/> (2023)
- <https://www.klktv.com/i/incident-prompts-lockdown-at-rhode-island-t-f-green-international-airport/> (2023)
- <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/rhode-island-man-admits-travel-intent-engage-illicit-sexual-conduct-after-hsi> (2024)
- <https://turnto10.com/news/local/rhode-island-authorities-charge-six-after-sting-operation-targeting-child-sex-trafficking-warwick-police-state-homeland-security-minors-sexual-activity-april-10-2024> (2024)
- <https://www.abc6.com/six-charged-in-sex-trafficking-targeting-sting-operation/> (2024)
- <https://warwickonline.com/stories/fighting-against-return-of-rhode-islands-dirty-little-secret,247506> (2024)
- <http://warwickonline.com/stories/fighting-against-return-of-rhode-islands-dirty-little-secret,247506?> (2024)
- <https://www.newsbreak.com/warwick-ri/3398725968877-six-charged-in-rhode-island-after-joint-state-and-federal-sting-operation-targeting-child-sex-trafficking> (2024)
- <https://lprnews.org/six-charged-in-joint-state-and-federal-sting-operation-targeting-child-sex-trafficking/> (2024)
- <https://riag.ri.gov/press-releases/six-charged-joint-state-and-federal-sting-operation-targeting-child-sex-trafficking> (2024)
- <https://www.dhs.gov/hsi/news/2024/07/10/rhode-island-man-admits-travel-intent-engage-illicit-sexual-conduct-after-hsi> (2024)
- <https://warwickonline.com/stories/police-log-04-11-2024,247512> (2024)
- <https://www.klktv.com/i/man-wanted-in-fall-river-sex-trafficking-ring-caught-at-t-f-green/> (2025)
- <https://patch.com/rhode-island/warwick/warwick-man-gets-15-years-trading-sex-pics-videos-new-jersey-girl> (2025)
- <https://www.klktv.com/i/incident-prompts-lockdown-at-rhode-island-t-f-green-international-airport/> (2025)
- **Sex buyer arrest, ID disclosure:** <https://www.masslive.com/news/2023/08/man-arrested-accused-of-paying-to-have-sex-with-a-teen-in-2016-police-say.html> (2023)
- **Web based reverse sting, ID:** <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/rhode-island-man-admits-travel-intent-engage-illicit-sexual-conduct-after-hsi> (2024)
- **Public Education:** <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/crime/2025/03/20/billboard-targets-sex-trafficking-in-providence-during-march-madness/82570338007/> (2025)
- **Background:** <https://warwickpost.com/warwick-arrests-april-2025-be-prostitution-embezzlement-assault/> (2025)

Woonsocket, RI background

- <https://www.southcoasttoday.com/story/news/state/2004/07/31/rhode-island-man-charged-with/50386807007/> (2004)
- <https://www.oxygen.com/twisted-killers/crime-news/rhode-island-serial-killer-jeffrey-mailhot-dismembered-women> (2016)

- <https://patch.com/rhode-island/cranston/cranston-police-officer-receives-u-s-investigative-excellence-award> (2023)
- <https://www.wpri.com/video/woonsocket-man-gets-18-years-for-sex-trafficking/8131438/>
- <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ri/pr/woonsocket-man-sentenced-more-eight-years-prison-role-conspiracy-trafficked-dozens-kilos>
- <https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2024/08/19/protect-people-in-the-sex-trade-not-those-who-buy-them/> (2024)
- <https://www.golocalprov.com/news/unsealed-indictment-charges-6-for-sex-trafficking-in-ri-ma-and-sc> (2024)
- <https://turnto10.com/news/local/rhode-island-man-and-massachusetts-man-charged-with-the-exploitation-of-a-minor-oxford-massachusetts-feb-16-2024> (2024)

Rhode Island State Legislation Updates

- https://www.academia.edu/4862301/Governor_Carcieri_Calls_for_Passage_of_Prostitution_Bill_H_50_44A_and_Trafficking_Bill_H_5661A (2009)
- <https://abc13.com/archive/6872352/> (2009)
- <https://victoriaadvocate.com/2009/11/03/ri-gov-signs-bill-banning-indoor-prostitution/> (2009)
- <https://whyy.org/articles/prostitution-decriminalized-rhode-islands-experiment/> (2017)
- <https://www.riaclu.org/news/report-calling-decriminalization-sex-work-cites-ris-history/> (2020)
- https://docs.rwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1708&context=rwu_LR (2020)
- <https://council.providenceri.gov/2021/05/10/providence-city-council-supports-rhode-island-general-assemblys-special-commission-to-study-sex-worker-safety/> (2021)
- <https://reason.com/2022/04/05/rhode-island-senators-consider-two-paths-to-decriminalizing-prostitution/> (2022)
- <https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText24/SenateText24/S2934.pdf> (2024)
- <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/06/03/metro/ri-house-judiciary-vote-h7167-sex-workers-immunity-prostitution-trafficking/> (2024)
- <https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2024/06/05/should-sex-workers-be-given-immunity-to-report-crimes/> (2024)
- <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/opinion/columns/2024/04/20/before-october-2009-prostitution-indoors-was-legal-in-rhode-island-and-the-state-was-considered-as-a/73255597007/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p&gca-ds=timeout> (2024)
- https://www.warwickonline.com/archives/op_ed/fighting-against-return-of-rhode-islands-dirty-little-secret/article_59801ebd-1c97-5356-8d09-dc6630303b7f.html (2024)
- <https://oceanstatecurrent.com/giannini-testimony-to-oppose-bill-to-legalize-prostitution-in-ri/> (2024)
- <https://www.aol.com/legislation-again-state-haven-sex-101033509.html> (2024)
- <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/government/2025/09/10/30-year-decriminalization-indoor-sex-work-rhode-island-offers-lessons-health-safety-benefits/85884867007/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=pp&gca-ds=override> (2025)
- <https://www.rilegislature.gov/senators/SenateComDocs/Judiciary/S0810%20Pyara%20Meyer.pdf> (2025)
- <https://trackbill.com/bill/rhode-island-senate-bill-810-an-act-relating-to-criminal-offenses-commercial-sexual-activity-decriminalizes-certain-commercial-sexual-activity-it-would-also-include-human-trafficking-as-a-racketeering-activity-and-would-allow-expungements-of-certain-convictions-in-11-34-1-after-one-year/2700484/> (2025)
- <https://www.rilegislature.gov/senators/SenateComDocs/Judiciary/S0810%20Dr.%20Hughes.pdf> (2025)
- <https://www.billtrack50.com/billdetail/1870321> (2025)

- <https://www.billtrack50.com/billdetail/1831919> (2025)
- <https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText26/HouseText26/H8057.pdf> (2026)

Rhode Island Communities w/ Demand Reduction	Population 2020 Census
<u>Bristol</u>	22,493
<u>Central Falls</u>	22,543
<u>Charlestown</u>	7,997
<u>Coventry</u>	35,819
<u>Cranston</u>	82,635
<u>Cumberland</u>	36,591
<u>East Greenwich</u>	14,626
<u>East Providence</u>	47,139
<u>Johnston</u>	29,679
<u>Middletown</u>	16,588
<u>Narragansett</u>	14,532
<u>Newport</u>	24,717
<u>North Providence</u>	34,114
<u>North Smithfield</u>	12,601
<u>Pawtucket</u>	75,321
<u>Portsmouth</u>	17,447
<u>Providence</u>	190,792
<u>Tiverton</u>	16,359
<u>Warwick</u>	82,653
<u>West Greenwich</u>	6,683
<u>West Warwick</u>	31,151
<u>Woonsocket</u>	43,135
Total	865,615



**Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee
Testimony of Rights4Girls
In Support of
HB 7201**

April 09, 2026

Thank you, Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 7201, and thank you, Chair McEntee, for your leadership in sponsoring this important bill. We appreciate the thoughtfulness that went into crafting its language and the willingness to address this critical issue disproportionately affecting women and girls in Rhode Island.

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Background

HB 7201 addresses a critical issue that states all across the country are tackling: male demand for commercial sex that fuels sex trafficking. Just last year, our organization released, *Buyers Unmasked: Exposing the Men Who Buy Sex & Solutions to End Exploitation*, a report featuring sex buyer quotes from across the United States—including Rhode Island— to expose how sex buyers view and discuss the individuals they purchase for sex acts. By showcasing buyers in their own words, highlighting key trends among their attitudes, and revealing demographic data of sex buyers versus sex trade survivors across the United States, we reveal how these (predominantly men) are fully aware and indifferent to overt signs of coercion and desperation in the people they purchase for sexual gratification.¹

We know that people in the sex trade are some of the most vulnerable in our communities. Many of the sex trade survivors we work with tell us that “they did not choose prostitution, but that prostitution chose them.” The majority have histories of childhood trauma or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)² including sexual abuse or incest, family violence, neglect, are members of the runaway and homeless youth communities, LGBTQIA+, and/or foster care communities,³ are disproportionately women and girls of color,⁴ and/or struggle with substance use disorder.⁵

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Prostituted women also report being urinated, defecated, and ejaculated upon, forced to have unprotected sex, and subjected to the insertion of foreign objects into their bodies.⁹ Given these horrific experiences, it is not surprising that 68% of prostituted women meet the criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), comparable to levels suffered by combat veterans and victims of state torture.¹⁰

Our Position on HB 7201 - Buyer Accountability Bill

Increasingly, states and the federal government are recognizing that the sex trade is a supply and demand-driven industry, and that in order to prevent sex trafficking, we must curb the demand that drives the market.¹¹ This requires implementing policies that deter sex-buying at the federal, state, and local levels in order to discourage patronizing sex and sex tourism. Unlike policies that seek to expand the commercial sex market (like HB 8057 that seeks to repeal prohibitions against sex-buying, pimping, and brothel-owning¹²) — strategies are needed that would reduce demand and discourage buyer behavior, thereby removing profit incentives from traffickers and shrinking the industry. Critically, this legislation, HB 7201, recognizes the importance of confronting the demand that fuels sex trafficking and seeks to hold accountable the sex buyers that keep this brutal industry churning. HB 7201 would increase fines for sex-buying in Rhode Island and direct fines from exploiters toward services for survivors, ensuring that accountability is paired with survivor-centered support. Importantly, HB 7201 also includes funds for a sex buyer rehabilitation program, an approach supported by our research.¹³

Buyer accountability programs, such as the *Stopping Sexual Exploitation: A Program for Men*, that we highlight in our report,¹⁴ not only educate sex buyers about the links between prostitution, sex

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trafficking, and gender-based violence, as well as the long-term harms inflicted on those they exploit, but significantly, have also been shown to change mindsets and attitudes amongst sex buyers.

We strongly urge the committee to support HB 7201. Not only would this legislation unmask sex buyers, hold them accountable, and curb demand, but it would do so while using buyer fines to help finance much-needed services for survivors and incentivize buyer accountability efforts with law enforcement.

In an era of federal funding instability and tightening state budgets, this legislation would create a self-sustaining revenue stream. Under this bill, those convicted of sex-buying would be required to pay a \$1,000 fine, the majority of which would go to the crime victim compensation fund. Thirty percent would help fund the sex buyer accountability program to help deter future exploitation and help change mindsets among exploiters. And a small portion, just 10 percent, would go to the law enforcement agency that arrested the convicted sex buyer, to help incentivize arrests and shift the culture around tolerating sex-buying as a “victimless crime.”

This small incentive is crucial because for a bill to change the culture around prostitution and shift the stigma from survivors onto their exploiters, the agencies responsible for enforcement must prioritize holding buyers accountable over the women. By allocating just 10 percent of the program fees directly to the arresting law enforcement agencies, the bill ensures that the specialized units required for demand-reduction operations are appropriately resourced and incentivized to prioritize these cases. Evidence from other jurisdictions suggests that without dedicated funding, law enforcement agencies silently de-prioritize pursuing buyers, leaving new buyer accountability statutes on the books but largely unenforced.

Conclusion

The question has never been about whether women have the right to sell their bodies; it has **always** been about whether men with more power and privilege should have the right to buy, use, and discard society’s most vulnerable— something the Epstein case has laid bare for all to see.

HB 7201 would hold sex buyers accountable and end their anonymity, educate those who perpetuate harm, and reduce demand, while at the same time, directing resources toward survivors who need support to heal and rebuild their lives.

This bill provides a sustainable, justice-centered mechanism to fund victim services by shifting the burden away from survivors and onto those who cause harm.

It is long past time to give survivors a real chance at safety, healing, and support, while holding accountable those responsible for lifelong trauma.

In just the past few months, Kansas¹⁵ and Missouri¹⁶ have joined four other states in making sex-buying a felony. In the last year, New Hampshire,¹⁷ California,¹⁸ and Maine¹⁹ have all passed laws increasing fines on

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sex buyers that go into survivor services. More than a dozen other states have laws pending that offer a combination of these and other penalties. Rhode Island can be the next state to step up for survivors, curb demand, and ultimately help to prevent trafficking.

We ask you to please stand with survivors and join the Senate in passing HB 7201 without delay.

We thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important bill. Should you have any additional questions, we welcome the opportunity to speak with you at your convenience. Inquiries can be directed to Peter Baptista (peter@capcomgrp.com) or Joe Baxter (jbaxter@capcomgrp.com).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Yasmin Vafa, Esq.
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Strengthening Accountability for Sex Buyers

In the last five years, state legislatures have increasingly recognized what survivors have long known: prostitution and sex trafficking are inextricably linked, and reducing sexual exploitation requires reducing buyer demand. Since 2021, six states have made solicitation a felony offense, and four additional states have increased fines on sex buyers— directing those funds to survivor support. In 2026, legislatures across the country are considering further measures to hold sex buyers accountable.

States That Have Passed Felony Accountability for Sex Buyers:

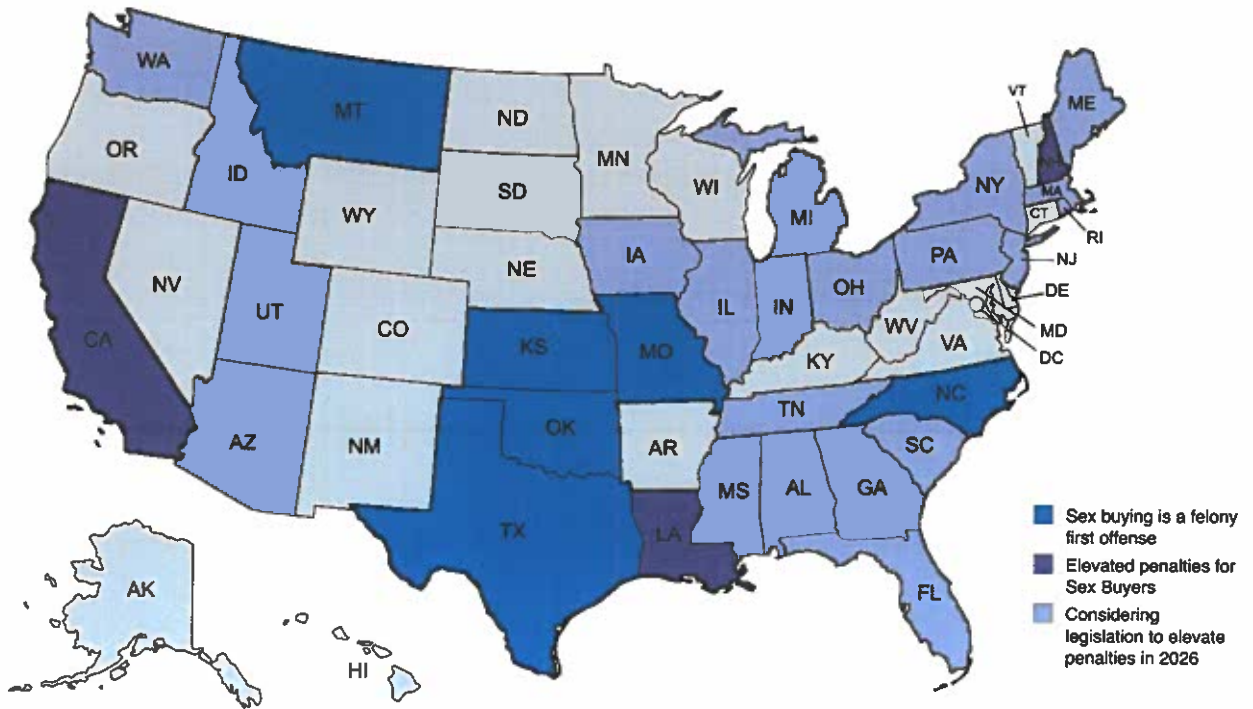
- North Carolina, Texas, Montana, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and Georgia (*sent to the Governor, pending signature*)
-

States That Have Passed Enhanced Penalties for Sex Buyers:

- New Hampshire (elevated fines for sex-buying, with fines directed into survivor support)
 - California (elevated fines for loitering with the intent to purchase, with fines directed to survivor support)
 - New Jersey (elevated fines for sex-buying and mandated buyer accountability program)
 - Louisiana (elevated fines for sex-buying and mandated buyer education program)
 - Maine (elevated fines for sex-buying and mandated buyer education program) (*sent to the Governor, pending signature*)
-

States With Enhanced Penalty Bills Pending This Session:

- **States with bills making sex-buying a felony on first offense:**
 - Arizona, Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, South Carolina, Washington
- **States with bills making sex-buying a felony on a second or repeat offense:**
 - Alabama, Florida
- **States with bills that enhance fines on sex buyers (some of which fund survivor support and/or include diversion programs):**
 - Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, Utah



April 9, 2026

130 E John Carpenter Fwy,
Suite 440, Irving, TX 75062

info@tjpadvocacy.org
www.TJPAdvocacy.org

Dear Honorable Members of the Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee,

On behalf of TJP Advocacy, I write today to request your support of HB 7201, An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Commercial Sexual Activity.

TJP Advocacy is a 501c (4) organization and is the action arm of The Jensen Project, a private operating foundation, dedicated to ending sexual violence through strategic grantmaking, partnerships, and survivor-centered solutions.

HB 7201 represents a meaningful, evidence-informed approach to addressing commercial sexual exploitation by targeting demand, the primary driver of the commercial sex trade. The bill establishes a Commercial Sex Buyer Accountability Program, including a \$1,000 fee that would fund the program, support law enforcement efforts, and contribute to the state's crime victim compensation fund, directly benefiting survivors.

Research on similar programs demonstrates strong outcomes. In jurisdictions such as Seattle, participation in sex buyer accountability programs has been associated with significant reductions in recidivism, with up to 96% of participants reporting they would not purchase sex again.

This approach aligns with what voters in Rhode Island support. In a 2025 survey conducted by The Jensen Project of 761 Rhode Island Voters:

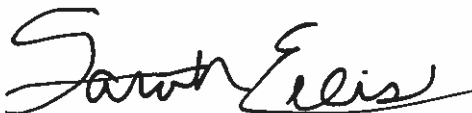
- 84% support of increasing penalties to sex buyers
- 87% prioritize reducing trafficking and violence
- Many believe the state should do more to support individuals in prostitution with resources and exit pathways.

HB 7201 advances a balanced, survivor-centered framework through reducing demand, holding buyers accountable, and reinvesting resources into survivor support

TJP Advocacy is committed to advancing policies that prevent exploitation, support pathways out of the commercial sex industry and hold those who cause harm accountable. We respectfully urge the committee to support HB 7201.

Thank you for your consideration, and please reach out if there are any questions.

Sincerely,



Sarah Johnston Ellis
TJP Advocacy



Thank you, members of the Committee, for taking the time to hear my testimony on this important piece of legislation. And thank you Chair McEntee, for your leadership in introducing this bill. My name is Audra Doody. I am the Co-Executive Director of Safe Exit Initiative in Worcester, MA, and a survivor of human trafficking. Today, I stand before you not only to share my story but to **strongly support HB 7201** — legislation that holds buyers accountable, reduces demand, and supports survivors like me.

For many years, my life was controlled by my traffickers who profited from my exploitation. What was painfully clear during that time, what remains a glaring truth in our society is that while survivors bear the lifelong consequences of trafficking, those who fuel the demand, the buyers, often walk away unscathed. Every time a buyer makes the choice to pay for sex, they are perpetuating a cycle of exploitation and abuse. They move with impunity and anonymity, escaping accountability for their direct role in continuing this cycle of abuse.

My journey has been long and painful. I can't even start to describe the horrors I experienced. Most of the abuse and violence I endured was from the sex buyers. They didn't view me as a human being. I was just an object to be used and abused. It didn't matter what agreements we had in place prior; they never listened and did whatever they wanted. Not one of the buyers ever asked me if I was there willingly. They didn't care. They ignored black eyes, bruises and track marks. What I lived through was not just a series of unfortunate events; it was a calculated crime driven by demand, the demand from buyers who sought to purchase someone like me. They often remain anonymous, escaping the consequences of their actions, while survivors are left to grapple with the scars that last a lifetime.

This bill changes that. By imposing meaningful fines and mandatory accountability programs for those convicted of buying sex, SB 2145/HB 7201 sends a powerful message: the demand side of trafficking will no longer be ignored or tolerated. This is not about punishing survivors; it's about ending exploitation at its root by targeting those who enable it to continue.

The funds collected from these penalties are directed primarily at the crime victim's compensation fund and to programs that support survivors—services that I, and many like me, relied on during the difficult journey to reclaim our lives. This funding is crucial to providing the supportive exit services survivors need to heal and recover. These resources help us rebuild our lives and regain the dignity that was stripped from us.

As a leader in this movement, I have witnessed firsthand how demand fuels trafficking and exploitation. Deterring buyers through penalties and education will help prevent others



from enduring the same pain and trauma I experienced. Most of the buyers don't even realize the harm they are causing. That is why education and prevention are so important.

In closing, I urge you to pass SB 2145/HB 7201 to protect survivors, hold buyers accountable, and take a decisive step toward ending sex trafficking in Rhode Island.

Thank you for your time and commitment to justice.

Sincerely,

Audra Doody
Co-Executive Director
Safe Exit Initiative
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