

Governor's FY 2017 Budget: Articles

Staff Presentation to the House Finance
Committee
March 30, 2016

Introduction

- Article 23 – Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children

Article 23 - Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children

- Creates new chapter of law - “the Rhode Island safe harbor for sexually exploited children act”
- Purpose of safe harbor
 - Ensure that minors who are victims of sex trafficking are provided immunity from prosecution for prostitution
 - Redirect child victims away from the criminal justice system and towards supportive services and programs

Article 23 - Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children

- Requires screening & risk assessment of potential victims
- Requires reporting of allegations to appropriate law enforcement agencies and DCYF
- Specifies eligibility for crime victims' compensation grants
 - These individuals are currently eligible for program benefits

Article 23 - Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children

- Requires screening & risk assessment
 - To determine if the child should be considered a victim of sex trafficking or sexual exploitation
- Requires DCYF w/ Attorney General & Dept. of Public Safety to
 - Identify a screening/risk assessment tool
 - Develop uniform response protocols for addressing sex trafficking and sexual exploitation of minors

Article 23 - Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children

- Requires that any child who is believed to be a victim of sex trafficking or sexual exploitation be reported to DCYF
- DCYF must report all such allegations to the appropriate law enforcement agencies who shall investigate such allegations jointly w/ DCYF

Article 23 - Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children

- Adds sex trafficking of a minor to the list of specific crimes that victims of which are eligible for crime victims' compensation
 - Appears these victims are generally covered either explicitly or through program interpretation

Article 23 - Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children

- Criminal Injuries Compensation Act of 1996 enables state to compensate innocent victims of violent crimes for certain expenses
 - Medical, dental and hospital expenses
 - Mental health counseling expenses
 - Funeral and burial expenses
 - Loss of earnings (victim only)
 - Loss of support (dependents of homicide victim)

Article 23 - Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children

- Restricted Receipts
 - Court fees
- Federal Funds
 - 60% match of claims paid by state
- Approximately \$1.5 million annually
- Currently no backlog or wait list

Governor's FY 2017 Budget: Articles

Staff Presentation to the House Finance
Committee
March 30, 2016
