

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7546

To amend title 18, United States Code, to increase the punishment for human trafficking in a school zone, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 21, 2022

Ms. JACKSON LEE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To amend title 18, United States Code, to increase the punishment for human trafficking in a school zone, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Stop Human Traf-
5 ficking in School Zones Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds as follows:

8 (1) Child sex trafficking can have devastating
9 immediate and long-term consequences, including

1 health impacts, psychological and physical trauma,
2 and even death.

3 (2) While any child can be targeted by a traf-
4 ficker, research, data, survivors' lived experiences,
5 and expertise have revealed that traffickers often
6 target vulnerable youth who lack strong support net-
7 works, supervision, care, or basic necessities, have
8 low self-esteem, have experienced violence in the
9 past, are experiencing homelessness, are experi-
10 encing academic difficulties, or are marginalized by
11 society, and lure them into forced labor and pros-
12 titution and other forms of sexual exploitation. Traf-
13 fickers are masters of manipulation and prey upon
14 vulnerabilities using psychological pressure, intimi-
15 dation, and drugs to control and sexually exploit the
16 child for their benefit.

17 (3) The National Center for Missing and Ex-
18 ploited Children (NCMEC) has received reports of
19 child sex trafficking in all 50 States, the District of
20 Columbia, and Puerto Rico. These reports include
21 incidents occurring in every type of community, in-
22 cluding suburban, rural, urban, and Tribal lands. In
23 2021, NCMEC received more than 17,200 reports of
24 possible child sex trafficking.

1 (4) Of 22,326 trafficking victims and survivors
2 identified through contacts with the National
3 Human Trafficking Hotline in 2019, at least 5,359
4 were under age 18.

5 (5) Many underage victims of sex trafficking
6 are students in the United States school system. No
7 community, school, socioeconomic group, or student
8 demographic is immune.

9 (6) While the internet and social media make
10 up the majority of first encounters, traffickers regu-
11 larly find young people in shopping malls, through
12 friends, at bus stops, and at schools. Specifically,
13 traffickers systematically target vulnerable children
14 and youth by frequenting locations where young peo-
15 ple congregate, including schools. They also use
16 peers or classmates, who befriend the target and
17 slowly groom them for the trafficker by bringing the
18 young person along to parties and other activities.

19 (7) A 2018 survey reported that 55 percent of
20 young sex trafficking survivors in Texas were traf-
21 ficked while at school or school activities and 60 per-
22 cent of trafficked adults say they were first groomed
23 and solicited for trafficking on school campuses.

24 (8) Schools can and should be safe havens for
25 students. Schools are best positioned to identify and

1 report suspected trafficking and connect affected
2 students to critical services. Students are more likely
3 to report instances of sex trafficking, attempted sex
4 trafficking, or grooming for the purposes of sex traf-
5 ficking where they feel most safe from harm and
6 threats.

7 **SEC. 3. INCREASED PUNISHMENT FOR HUMAN TRAF-**
8 **FICKING IN SCHOOL ZONES.**

9 Section 1591 of title 18, United States Code, is
10 amended—

11 (1) by redesignating subsection (e) as sub-
12 section (f); and

13 (2) by inserting after subsection (d) the fol-
14 lowing:

15 “(e)(1) Whoever violates subsection (a) in a school
16 zone (as such term is defined in section 921), or on, or
17 within 1,000 feet of, a premises on which a school-spon-
18 sored activity is taking place, shall, in addition the punish-
19 ment otherwise provided under this section, be imprisoned
20 for not more than 5 years.

21 “(2) In this subsection, the term ‘school-sponsored
22 activity’ means any activity that is produced, financed, ar-
23 ranged, supervised or coordinated by a school, district per-

1 sonnel, or State or local educational agency or is under
2 the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency.”.

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