

From: Office of the Governor Site Support
Sent: 3/28/2015 4:29:34 PM
To: Haley, Nikki
Cc:
Subject: RE: Communications Decency Act

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Message:
Ann Mitchum
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March 28, 2015

1205 Pendleton Street
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Dear Governor Haley,

Congress passed the Communications Decency Act (Title V of the Telecommunications Act of 1996) to protect children from exposure to Internet pornography. The act included a defense, Section 230, for Internet providers, protecting them from liability for material posted to their sites by 3rd parties. Thus if illegal pornography or other material is posted to a site by someone not associated with the site operator, the site was to be held harmless.

Section 230 was well intentioned but when the substantive portions of the CDA were held unconstitutional, the 230 defense was left standing and has been used by companies like Backpage, which holds its site out as a place to advertise illegal conduct such as sex trafficking of women and children. Congress never intended this result yet some courts have ruled that the 230 defense provides, in effect, blanket website immunity for all material posted by 3rd parties on the sites. It is estimated that Backpage alone makes approximately \$3 million per month on ads for prostituted and trafficked women and children.

We cannot allow companies like Backpage.com to get away with facilitating prostitution and sex trafficking simply because they stand behind the excuses provided by this law. They make millions of dollars (Backpage made \$39 million by facilitating prostitution with adult ads June 2012-May 2013) off of the sexual exploitation of women and children. We cannot allow this to continue in the United States of America.

We write to urge you to do something to help fix this broken law as this is NOT what Congress intended. These companies should not be able to hide behind this excuse and allow the further sexual exploitation of thousands of women and children so they can make a profit.

The National Center on Sexual Exploitation (www.EndSexualExploitation.org) is able to help you learn more about these issues and aid you in your efforts if you take this on.

Sincerely,
Ann Mitchum