
Comments from the H.B. 200 Hearing

"We don't want to make criminals out of victims," said a judge.

My response, "We don't want to make victims out of criminals."

A Cultural Shift: Providing "Victim" Status to Prostitutes Under 18

Sex trafficking is a heinous crime whose victims should be rescued, protected and rehabilitated. But, tragically, some individuals choose prostitution and other illicit sex as professions. To classify professionals as victims is a miscarriage of justice that could encourage other youth to join them in unhealthy dangerous lifestyles.

In 2009 H.B. 582 was introduced to decriminalize prostitution and give victim status to anyone under age 18. It died in committee. In 2010, for persons under age 16, S.B. 304 would have decriminalized participation in prostitution and other sexually explicit acts. A substitute version of S.B. 304 listed prostitution and other sex crimes as "unruly child" behaviors, classifying youthful sex acts as no more serious than skipping school. S.B. 304 died in committee, also.

Both bills redefined *all* underage prostitutes as victims, including those that *choose* to prostitute themselves. Reasons for that: (a) Victims receive compensation from Georgia's Crime Victims Compensation Board and the federal Crime Victims' Bill of Rights. (b) Victim status is a step toward establishing prostitution and other sexually explicit conduct as respected professions.

H.B. 200, this year's bill by Representative Ed Lindsey, increases penalties for pimping and trafficking, but for sex providers under 18 no criminal charge would be made for prostitution or other illicit sex acts. They would be classified as victims, eligible for victim compensation.

H.B. 200 passed the Non Civil Judiciary Committee February 24th amid assurances that to qualify as victims, prostitutes of all ages must prove "coercion or deception." However, the bill does not require that of underage prostitutes. If sexually explicit conduct is, simply, "obtained" (without coercion or deception) from persons under age 18, they would be included in the "sexual servitude" category, making them eligible for victim status and victim compensation.

ACTION – Oppose as unnecessary. Current laws apply to issues in H.B. 200. Penalties for illicit sex are barriers to harmful lifestyles and deterrents to illegal acts. Repealing current law would drastically alter Georgia culture.

Contact House Rules Representatives as follows: (a) If your representative is listed, please make that contact first. (b) Then, call the other names familiar to you. (c) Finally, contact several at random.

Ch. Representatives Meadows, 404 656-5141; V-Ch., Golick, 404 656-5943; Sec. Mills, 404 657-8441; Bearden, 404 656-5096; Benton, 404 656-0177; Casas, 404 656-0254; Channell, 404 656-5103; Cooper, 404 656-5069; Dempsey, 404 656-0213; Drenner, 404 656-0202; Ehrhart, 404 463-2247; Greene, 404 656-0202; Hanner, 404 656-7859; Hembree, 404 656-6801; Manning, 404 656-7857; Mitchell, 404 656-0126; Morris, 404 656-5099; Mosby, 404 656-0287; Parrish, 404 463-2247; Randall, 404 656-0109; Rice, 404 656-5912; Roberts, 404 656-7153; Setzler, 404 656-0177; Sheldon, 404 656-5025; L. Smith, 404 656-7149; R. Smith, 404 656-6831; Smyre, 404 656-0116; Stephens, 404 656-5099; L. Walker, 404 656-5146; Weldon, 404 656-0152; and Willard, 404 656-5125.

Ex-Officio: Abrams, 404 656-5058; Hugley, 404 656-5058; J. Jones, 404 656-5072; Lindsey, 404 656-5024; O'Neal, 404 656-5052

My concerns: H.B. 200 allows persons under 18 to be classified as victims though they (a) are *not* sex trafficking victims, (b) *do not* have a pimp or (c) *choose to free-lance* sexually explicit conduct in prostitution, sodomy, solicitation of sodomy, masturbation for hire, pornography.

S.R. 153 Natural Life 'til Natural Death

Last year's attempt to pass pro-life legislation failed, but on February 15th Senator Barry Loudermilk introduced a bill to take its place. S.R. 153 is a proposed constitutional amendment that defines the beginning of life as the moment of conception, regardless of age, race, sex, health, function, or condition of dependency. Meaning, God gave unborn babies just as much right to life as the healthiest human being ever born.

In response to my request, Senator Loudermilk explained his reason for introducing S.R. 153: "Thomas Jefferson stated, 'God who gives us life, gives us liberty.' These eight words reflect an important belief that our founding fathers so strongly held to. That God has endowed us with rights that cannot be taken away. Jefferson's statement also reflects the idea that is stated in the Declaration of Independence, that our rights are not all equal, but they have precedence. Life is the greatest right that God has bestowed upon man. It is the top of the list of enumerated rights in our Declaration, followed by liberty, and then the pursuit of happiness.

"Accordingly, the Declaration states that the purpose of government is to protect the rights given to man, by God. Therefore, it is the ultimate responsibility of civil government, to enact laws and policies to protect life above all other rights and liberties. It is for this reason that I have introduced S.R. 153, an amendment to the Georgia Constitution, which will formally define 'a person' and establish the Constitutional foundation to protect their rights.

"This amendment will define that 'a person' is 'any human being at any state of biological development.' Once adopted, Georgia will have answered a question that has been at the heart of the pro life issue for decades: 'When does life begin?' In Georgia, we will have stated that life begins at conception."

That beautiful explanation declares God as our Creator and Giver of Life to all of us, from the tiniest human in the womb to the oldest of our elders.

ACTION – Support. Call Rules Committee Senators Balfour, Ch., 404 656-0095; Hamrick, V-Ch., 404 656-0036; Mullis, Sec., 404 656-0057; Seabaugh, 404 656-6446; Cowsert, Ex-Officio, 404 463-1383; Hill, 404 656-5038; Rogers, 404 463-1378; Williams, 404 656-0089; Tolleson, 404 656-0081; Staton, Ex-Officio, 404 656-5039; Goggans, Ex-Officio, 404 463-5263; Bulloch, 404 656-0040; Shafer, 404 656-0048; Hooks, 404 656-0065; Henson, 404 656-0085; Butler, 404 656-0075; and Unterman, 404 463-1368.

Driver's License Renewals

S.B. 138, introduced February 23rd by Senator Lindsey Tippins, modifies the driver's license renewal law as follows:

"An applicant for a tag renewal shall sign a statement to the effect that such person is in possession of a valid Georgia driver's license or Georgia identification card. The signed statement shall include the applicant's driver's license or identification card number. A person making a false statement in his or her application for a tag renewal shall be guilty of a violation of Code Section 16-10-20."

Violators of Code Section 16-10-20 have provided false information, concealed facts or submitted a fraudulent document to the state or local government. The current penalty for that is one to five years in prison and a \$1,000 fine or both, but S.B. 138 raises that fine to \$2,500.

ACTION – Support. Contact Public Safety Committee Senators Grant, Ch., 404 656-0082; Albers, V-Ch., 404 463-8055; Hamrick, Sec., 404 656-0036; Ligon, 404 656-0045; Murphy, 404 656-7127; Butler, 404 656-0075; Seay, 404 656-5095; and J. Carter, 404 463-1376.

Sunday Sales of Alcoholic Beverages

S.B. 10, introduced by Senator Bulloch on January 25th, would allow each municipality or county that authorizes retail package sales of *malt beverages and wine* to authorize retail package sales of malt beverages and wine on Sundays, from 12:30 P.M. until 11:30 P.M., if voters approve it by referendum. The same applies in counties and municipalities that allow retail sales of *malt beverages, wine and distilled spirits*. Such sales may be authorized, also, on Sundays from 12:30 p.m. until 11:30 P.M., if approved by referendum. If S.B. 10 passes both House and Senate, it would be on the 2012 General Election ballot for voters to pass or defeat.

ACTION – Oppose. Contact Senate State and Local Governmental Operations Committee Senators Miller, Ch., 404 656-6578; Jeffares, V-Ch., 404 656-0503; Ginn, Sec., 404 656-4700; Gooch, 404 656-9221; James, 404 463-1379; Stoner, 404 463-2518; Tate, 404 463-8053; and Butterworth, Ex-Officio, 404 651-7738.

Illegal Aliens and Unemployment Benefits

S.B. 65 was introduced by Senator Heath to prohibit the payment of unemployment benefits to non-citizens that are illegally employed in the United States. To receive unemployment benefits, a qualified alien must be legally present in this country when payments are made. For payment to be authorized, proof of eligibility must be uniformly required of all applicants. A preponderance of evidence proving alien status is required before unemployment benefits can be denied.

ACTION – Support. Contact Judiciary Committee Senators Hamrick, Ch., 404 656-0036; Cowser, V-Ch., 404 463-1383; Crosby, Sec., 404 463-5258; Bethel, 404 656-6436; McKoon, 404 463-3931; Stone, 404 463-1314; Ligon, 404 656-0045; Fort, 404 656-5091; Brown, 404 656-5035; Ramsey, 404 463-2598, and Jason Carter, 404 463-1376.

Extending Consumer Exemptions from Sales & use Taxes

Currently in the Georgia General Assembly, the Special Joint Committee on Georgia Revenue Structure is considering recent recommendations from the appointed eleven-member Council on Tax Reform and Fairness that has proposed massive tax increases on Georgians. Several tax exemption bills have been introduced “to continue for a limited period of time the exemption” on certain things. All were sent to the House Ways & Means Committee. See the following:

Representative Roberts introduced the following to extend a specific tax exemption:

H.B. 322 continues partial exemption from sales and use taxes on jet fuel until 7-1-13.

Representative Stephens introduced seven bills to extend tax exemptions for a limited time:

H.B. 317 exempts sales to certain nonprofit volunteer health clinics until 12-31-14.

H.B. 318 exempts food donated to a qualified nonprofit agency for hunger relief until 12-31-14.

H.B. 319 exempts sales of tangible property to nonprofit volunteer health clinics until 12-31-14.

H.B. 320 exempts sales or leases in connection with development authority projects, for a time.

H.B. 331 exempts qualified job training organizations from state sales and use tax, for a time.

H.B. 333 exempts food donated for disaster relief, for a limited time.

H.B. 334 exempting eligible food and beverages to a qualified food bank until 12-31-14.

ACTION – Support. **The eight bills listed above would counteract tax increases currently under consideration.** Contact Ways & Means Committee Representatives Channell, Ch., 404 656-5103; Knight, V-Ch., 404 656-3904; Sims, Sec., 404 656-7855; England, Ex-Officio, 404 463-2245; Abrams, 404 656-5058; R. Austin, 404 656-0287; Battles, 404 656-0152; Beasley-Teague, 404 656-0220; Black, 404 656-0287; Bryant, 404 656-0298; Fludd, 404 656-0314; Harbin, 404 656-3949; Houston, 404 463-2247; C. Martin, 404 656-5064; Mills, 404 657-8441; Mosby, 404 656-0287; O’Neal, 404 656-5052; Parsons, 404 656-5198; Peake, 404 656-5025; J. Powell, 404 656-7856; Rice, 404 656-5912; J. Roberts, 404 656-7153; M. Scott, 404 656-0254; M. Stephens, 404 656-0116; R. Stephens, 404 656-5099; Talton, 404 656-5116; R. Taylor, 404 656-0220; Willard, 404 656-5125; and R. Williams, 404 656-3904.

Protecting State Sovereignty

S.B. 62 was introduced by Senator Ligon on February 9th to protect the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the state of Georgia. The bill provides the following:

“(a) No private property within the borders of this state shall be alienated in any manner to any other state, territory, or nation or to the federal government if such action would result in the extinguishment or diminution of the state’s right to exercise sovereignty or jurisdiction over such property without the express approval of the General Assembly by resolution approved by a two-thirds’ vote of the members of each chamber.

“(b) Any act which results in the extinguishment or diminution of the state’s right to exercise sovereignty or jurisdiction over any property over which the state’s sovereignty and jurisdiction extends pursuant to Code Section 50-2-20 shall not be recognized by the state and shall be void and of no effect.”

ACTION – Support. Contact Judiciary Committee Senators Hamrick, Ch., 404 656-0036; Cowser, V-Ch., 404 463-1383; Crosby, Sec., 404 463-5258; Bethel, 404 656-6436; McKoon, 404 463-3931; Stone, 404 463-1314; Ligon, 404 656-0045; Fort, 404 656-5091; Brown, 404 656-5035; Ramsey, 404 463-2598, and Jason Carter, 404 463-1376.

Opening EMC Meetings to the Public

H.B. 316 introduced by Representative Willard on February 23rd requires electric membership boards of directors and EMC committees to take action only in open meetings. Also, it requires EMC records to be subject to public inspection.

ACTION – Support. Contact Energy, Utilities, and Telecommunications Representatives Parsons, Ch. 404 656-9198; Geisinger, V-Ch., 404 656-0254; Horne, Sec., 404 656-0287; Amerson, 404 657-8443; Baker, 404 656-0202; Dempsey, 404 636-0213; Drenner, 404 656-0202; Dudgeon, 404 656-0298; Frazier, 404 656-0265; Fullerton, 404 656-0126; Hamilton, 404 656-5132; Harbin, 404 656-3949; Holt, 404 656-0152; Hudson, 404 656-7859; Lucas, 404 656-0220; C. Martin, 404 656-5064; E. Smith, 404 656-6372; “Coach” Williams, 404 656-0202; and Roger Williams, 404 656-3904.



Please Answer and Return This Survey

Return to: *Georgia Insight*, 4168 Rue Antoinette, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083

Was a “smart meter” installed to register electric use at your home or business? Yes No

Did you give informed permission for its installation? Yes No

Did you ask for “time-based” billing before the installation? Yes No

Were its functions explained thoroughly before installation? Yes No

Has your electric bill increased dramatically since installation? Yes No

Have you noticed new health problems since its installation? Yes No

If you answered yes, please explain the new health problems.

Did you ask the utility to remove it and reinstall an analog meter? Yes No

Did the utility reinstall the analog meter? Yes No

Your Name & Address _____

Name and Location of Your Utility Co. _____



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