



The League of Women Voters of New York State
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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF: **A.506 Paulin**

TO: New York State Assembly
DATE: March 16, 2015

Subject: *An act to amend the penal law, the criminal procedure law, the social services law, the civil practice law and rules, the mental hygiene law, the correction law, the vehicle and traffic law, the public health law, the real property actions and proceedings law, and the real property law, in relation to enacting the "trafficking victims protection and justice act"; to amend the penal law, in relation to prostitution in a school zone; to amend chapter 74 of the laws of 2007 amending the penal law, the criminal procedure law, the correction law, the social services law, and the executive law relating to human trafficking, in relation to extending the interagency task force on human trafficking for four years; and to amend the executive law, in relation to human trafficking awareness.*

The League of Women Voters of New York State (LWVNYS) strongly supports measures to strengthen our State's laws against human trafficking, a brutal crime that disproportionately impacts women and girls. According to the U.S. Justice Department, New York is a national hub for the trafficking of women and girls, repeatedly named as one of the top cities that traffickers use as both a point of entry into the U.S., transit location and a final destination point for their victims. LWVNYS firmly believes that New York laws need to adequately address this unfortunate reality.

This legislation improves in several significant ways the State's response to human trafficking by enhancing protection of and assistance to victims of trafficking, particularly in instances of commercial sexual exploitation of children, and increasing the accountability of buyers and traffickers who are fueling the growth of this massive underground industry. The bill offers better protection to survivors of human trafficking, especially minors, by treating survivors as victims and increasing penalties to punish offenders by:

- Creating an affirmative defense to a prostitution charge that the individual was a trafficking victim;
- Increasing penalties across the board for human trafficking and labor trafficking;
- Creating new offenses, in increasing degrees, of aggravated patronizing a minor; and
- Creating a civil action for victims of trafficking against their perpetrators.

The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly urges your support for this legislation.