

Hello Members of the Committee,

My name is Ally, and I am a survivor of Human trafficking. I am here today “in strong support of SB26-15.

When someone buys sex from a child, it is not a “choice,” and it is not a “transaction.” What buyers are doing is not consensual sex, it is abuse. It is exploitation. It is violence.

I am a survivor of Robert Hawkins, who was given the longest sentence for a Trafficker at 448 years. While he was held accountable, not one buyer that purchased me was. My time under this man who I knew as Tadal, and he branded me with that name of his so I could never forget who I was made to believe I belonged to. Those men who bought me saw that brand, and instead of helping me, they just handed over the money. I was scared, vulnerable, and I had no real power. No matter what anyone told me, no matter what I said to survive, I did not have the ability to truly consent. Buyers may have convinced themselves they were just paying for something, but what they were really doing was taking advantage of someone who could not protect themselves.

Every buyer who touched me made a decision. They chose their desire over my safety, my humanity, and my future.

They didn’t just hand over money. They traded it for pieces of my trust, and my sense of worth. They broke something inside me that can never be undone. The trauma did not end when the case was done. I have lived with it every day since.

The harm caused by buyers is long-lasting. I faced depression, PTSD, anxiety, and lifelong struggles with self-worth and safety. These are not temporary wounds. These are deep and permanent impacts that follow us into adulthood, and consequences should follow ALL the men who helped inflict these wounds on me.

Buying sex from someone fuels trafficking. Buyers create the demand that keeps this system alive. Their money encourages traffickers to recruit, coerce, and exploit more children. My trafficker had no problem selling children, and men had no problem paying my trafficker to have sex with children. When buyers are not held accountable, the abuse continues, and more children are harmed.

This is why I strongly believe buyers should face serious criminal consequences, including jail time. Not only because it is illegal, but because it is morally wrong. Adults have a responsibility to protect children, not exploit them.

Holding buyers accountable is not about revenge. It is about justice. It is about protecting children who cannot protect themselves. It is about sending a clear message that children are not for sale.

What happened to me was not my fault. The blame belongs to the men who chose to harm me. I am asking you to pass this bill so fewer children will have to live with the kind of trauma that I carry.

Please vote in favor of this bill.

Thank you for your time and for listening.

Hello,

My name is Areila, I am writing to you to ask you to vote yes on SB15. I want you to pass you this bill because I was a victim of Human Trafficking from ages 14-18, I am 18 now. It is rape. Kids are put with these grown men by pimps by force and no other choice. You guys keep arresting the wrong people, these tricks are the problem and why we are made to do it in the first place. I know I did not want a bunch of old white men looking and using me like i was less than them, they did not care i had a hard home life, or was being used or about my age, they just took what they wanted and paid my pimp. It does not stop until you stop the tricks, period.

Members of the committee,

My name is Britney, and I am a survivor of child exploitation.

When I was 17 years old, I should have been focused on school, graduation, and planning my future. Instead, I was being groomed and manipulated by an almost 50-year-old man who saw my vulnerability online and used it to control me.

He lied to gain my trust. He promised me love, stability, and safety. What he gave me instead was abuse, isolation, and exploitation. He took me away from my life and subjected me to repeated sexual violence. He forced me into situations where my body was used to fund his lifestyle. And when I resisted, the abuse escalated into physical violence and threats.

This didn't just happen to me. While I was there, I watched him abuse dozens of other young people.

This is not rare. This is not an isolated case, even though my case did make national headlines. This is what happens when there is demand, when people are willing to buy access to vulnerable children and when predators know they can profit from it. Although my case made headlines, not one man who bought me was held accountable because I was told there is no real teeth in going after the buyers, and they won't receive jail, how is that ok?

SB15 matters because it addresses that demand and the online exploitation. It is time to give it TEETH!

It recognizes that exploitation doesn't happen in a vacuum. There are predators who groom and control, but there are also buyers who create the market. If no one was willing to buy children, predators like the one who abused me would not have the power they do. If there were real consequences for those men that put my trafficker in business, maybe, just maybe they would not have done what they did to me.

For too long, the burden has fallen on victims, children, just to survive, to escape, and to rebuild their lives. Meanwhile, those creating the demand face far fewer consequences.

That has to change!

Because what happened to me didn't just take over a year of my life, it took my sense of safety, my mental health, my relationships, and milestones I will never get back. I missed time with my family. I lost people I loved. And I am still living with PTSD and anxiety every day.

No child should have to carry that.

Going after traffickers alone is not enough. We have to go after the systems and the demand that allow this to continue. We have to send a clear message that exploiting children, whether by controlling them or buying access to them, will not be tolerated!

This is about prevention. This is about accountability. And this is about protecting children before they become victims.

I am here today because I survived. But many others are still trapped in situations like the one I am no longer in.

We cannot wait.

Thank you for listening to me, I ask you please vote yes on SB15 and not allow the system again to tell me why this is not possible.

**Chair, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.**

I am a law-enforcement professional, for the Fountain Police Department in southern Colorado, and I urge you to uphold SB26-015.

From a law-enforcement standpoint, penalties matter. Strong sentencing gives investigators and prosecutors the tools needed to protect victims, ensure offender accountability, and prevent future harm. When penalties are without sufficient burden, our ability to impose meaningful supervision, treatment requirements, and long-term monitoring, is weakened. This bill updates harmful statutory language for all statutes in SB15 and mandates time in Department of Corrections with the exception of Solicitation for Child prostitution.

We also know from experience that child sex offenders present a significant risk of reoffending, particularly when accountability is reduced. Failure to support this bill would further limit the justice system's ability to incapacitate high-risk offenders and deter others. That is not a theoretical concern, it is a public-safety reality faced by Colorado communities every day.

Failure to uphold this legislation would also have unintended consequences. Reduced penalties make these cases harder to prosecute, diminish incentives for offender compliance with law and supervision, and undermine the confidence of victims and families who are already hesitant to come forward.

If the goal is rehabilitation or fairness, law enforcement supports approaches that strengthen treatment, prevention, and victim services. But those goals should not come at the expense of consequences for crimes committed against children.

Supporting this bill is a substantial step toward higher penalties for some of the most vile of offenders. I respectfully ask you to strongly uphold this bill and reaffirm Colorado's commitment to safety, accountability, and justice.

**Thank you for your time and consideration.**



**Sergeant Stephen Williams**

**Fountain Police Department**

**Counter Human Trafficking Investigations**

BILL NO: Senate Bill 26-015  
TITLE: CONCERNING OFFENSES INVOLVING COMMERCIAL SEXUAL ACTIVITY WITH A CHILD  
COMMITTEE: House Judiciary  
DATE: April 29, 2026  
POSITION: SUPPORT

Dear Chairperson Mabrey and Subcommittee Members:

Thank you for hearing testimony on Senate Bill 26-015 (“SB 26-015”) relating to the plight of child sex trafficking victims within the state.

Shared Hope International is a non-profit organization dedicated to preventing, restoring, and bringing justice to survivors of child and youth sex trafficking. Shared Hope has been working in Washington, across the country, and throughout the globe for over 25 years to guide and support appropriate responses to protect survivors, hold offenders to account, and ultimately prevent the crime entirely.

SB26-015 represents a critical and overdue step forward in protecting children by modernizing outdated statutory language and holding those who create the demand for commercial sexual exploitation appropriately accountable. Children who are bought and sold for sex are victims of exploitation—not participants in criminal activity. Yet for far too long, state laws across the country have relied on terminology rooted in “child prostitution,” language that obscures the coercion, abuse, and power imbalance inherent in these crimes. By replacing this outdated framing with the term “commercial sexual activity with a child,” SB26-015 makes explicit what research, survivor experience, and common sense already confirm: children cannot consent to their own exploitation.

Equally important, SB26-015 directly addresses the demand that fuels commercial sexual exploitation. Exploitation does not occur in a vacuum. It exists because individuals are willing to buy access to a child’s body. Through our *Demanding Justice* report, Shared Hope has conducted a comprehensive analysis of state laws nationwide and consistently found that weak, ambiguous, or outdated demand-side statutes undermine accountability and allow exploiters to evade meaningful consequences.

Our research demonstrates that laws which clearly define buyer conduct, establish strong intent standards, and impose serious penalties for knowingly soliciting a child are among the most effective tools states have to prevent exploitation before it occurs. SB26-015 does exactly that by strengthening penalties for those who knowingly solicit a child for commercial sexual activity and by increasing consequences when internet luring or technology is used to facilitate exploitation. These provisions reflect the modern realities of how buyers access and exploit children today. Importantly, demand-focused accountability is not merely punitive—it is preventive. Evidence and on-the-ground experience show that when buyers face clear legal consequences, exploitation decreases. Strong demand-side laws improve prosecutorial outcomes, deter would-be offenders, and shift the burden of accountability away from victims and onto those who cause the harm.

SB26-015 reflects a survivor-centered, evidence-informed approach that aligns Colorado’s statutes with national best practices and our evolving understanding of child sexual exploitation. It sends a clear message that our state will no longer tolerate laws that minimize harm, mislabel victims, or fail to hold exploiters fully accountable.

For these reasons, Shared Hope International urges your support for SB26-015. This legislation will strengthen child protections, modernize our legal framework, and reaffirm our shared commitment to ensuring that children are treated as victims in need of protection—not as criminals.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Respectfully submitted,

Sincerely,



Sidney E. McCoy, Esq.

*For questions or additional information:*  
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