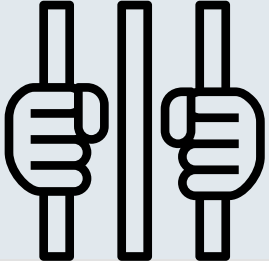
PROTECT VICTIMS FROM LIFE IN PRISON:

VOTE "NO" ON PROP 133



As leaders in Colorado's victim services community who support and advocate for victim-survivors of human trafficking, sexual and domestic violence, and child abuse, we share a fundamental commitment to safety, healing, and accountability. Let's be clear:

- ✓ Human trafficking is an abhorrent crime with lasting impacts on victims' health, employment, and housing.
- ✓ Victims deserve safety, support, trauma-informed care, and access to justice.
- ✓ Traffickers who exploit children and youth should be held accountable.

However, Prop 133 is not the answer and will hurt the victims it claims to protect.

PROP 133 WOULD:	PROP 133 WOULD NOT:
↗ Increase the penalty for human trafficking of a minor for sexual servitude to mandatory life in prison without parole.	X Prevent child trafficking, guarantee justice for victims, or create safer communities.
Put victims at risk of spending life in prison for actions they are **forced or coerced** to do.	X "Shield" victims from prosecution or give victims immunity from life in prison without parole.
↘ Reduce reporting by increasing victims' fear of prosecution and traffickers.	X Provide victims trauma-informed care, supportive services, therapy, housing, or medical care.
Remove existing protections and leave youth victims with limited legal defense.	X Invest in evidence-based, specialized investigation, enforcement, or prevention.

Prop 133 is unnecessary and harmful to victims. Colorado has some of the longest trafficking sentences in the US due to "sentence stacking," with some sentences over 400 years. Colorado also increased penalties for trafficking crimes in June 2026.

Prop 133 treats youth victims the same as their perpetrators. Traffickers often target vulnerable minors—like those with extensive trauma histories who are involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. By grooming and abusing victims, traffickers gain control and force victims to commit crimes covered by Prop 133, like posting ads, recruiting new victims (often peers), and facilitating encounters.

Prop 133 leaves youth victims with limited legal defense and requires proof of their victimization. Currently, youth victims charged with crimes they were forced or coerced to commit while being trafficked can use an "affirmative defense" to prove their victimization and reduce their sentence. If Prop 133 passes, victims remain without immunity from prosecution and risk a life sentence before 18.

To protect victims, we must ensure they feel safe enough to come forward. Many victims, especially youth, do not initially understand their experiences as a crime. Traffickers often threaten to report victims to law enforcement to maintain power and control. Every time a victim is charged and convicted, it makes it harder for others to come forward.

Under Prop 133, youth victims could be sentenced to life in prison before turning 18.

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Prop 133 gives traffickers another tool to exploit victims and evade accountability.

Victims who report do so at great risk to their safety and the safety of those they love. Traffickers often make "examples" of victims who have been prosecuted to prevent others from coming forward.

Victims who are prosecuted must spend time and scarce resources proving their trauma in court instead of healing. Victims who don't have enough documentation to prove their victimization risk the same penalties as their traffickers, who go to great lengths to make documentation difficult, if not impossible, for victims.

Trafficking convictions disproportionately impact young adults. Between 2022-24, the majority of people convicted of human trafficking in Colorado were between 20 and 29. Compared to resourced traffickers, victims already struggling to cope with their trauma rarely have resources for strong legal counsel.

"Research shows coercion is powerful, complex, and often misunderstood. Survivors' decisions are driven by safety, fear, and survival, not free choice."

-Sex trafficking victim-survivor from Denver who has seen victims jailed, charged, and restrained when testifying in court

Victims have been through enough. Don't send them from one life sentence to another.

Mandatory life sentences without parole are extreme. Even in states that make a life sentence possible, the vast majority have a sentencing range, subject to judicial discretion. This allows judges to consider victims' unique backgrounds and lived experiences (e.g., abuse history, family background, victimization) when sentencing. It also allows judges to grant, and "stack," longer sentences for traffickers to reflect the severity of harm caused.

EXAMPLE SENTENCING RANGES ACROSS THE US

- UT: 10 years to life with possibility of parole
- OK:15 years to life with possibility of parole
- NE: 20 years to life with possibility of parole
- WY: 25-50 years with possibility of parole
- KS: mandatory life in prison only if the victim is under 14; sentencing varies otherwise

To stop child sex trafficking, we must address the conditions traffickers exploit & strengthen long-term public safety →

- ✓ **Trauma-informed services** & safe, stable housing
- ✓ **Survivor-centered reporting** systems & screening tools
- ✓ **Community education** & public awareness
- ✓ **Prevention efforts** that reduce exploitation vulnerability
- ✓ **Robust legal protections** for trafficking victims

Victim advocates, service providers, and survivors agree:

Prop 133 punishes victims and gives traffickers a tool for exploitation.

Protect victims from life in prison by voting "NO" this November!

RMVLC ROCKY MOUNTAIN victim law center

COVA

Colorado Children's Alliance

Violence Free Colorado

Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault

For questions or more information, please contact policy@ccasa.org or policy@covahelps.org