

RESOLUTION NO. 448**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND TO JOIN WITH THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES AND THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN TO INITIATE A CAMPAIGN DEDICATED TO PREVENTING COMMERCIAL CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, in a one year period, an estimated 1.6 million children either ran away from or were thrown out of their homes; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 40,000 of these children will be involved in some form of sexual exploitation and victimization by predators; and

WHEREAS, many child victims of prostitution are abandoned or neglected children, who have not been reported missing to law enforcement or have run away from their homes or foster care; and

WHEREAS, the average age at which a child enters into prostitution is 14 years old. However, children as young as 9 years old are being exploited; and

WHEREAS, although hundreds of thousands of children have been lured into prostitution, it is far too often overlooked that a child can never consent to prostitution – it is always exploitation; and

WHEREAS, though the prostitution of female children is more widely publicized, male children are also susceptible to the same dangers as females in this world of exploitation; and

WHEREAS, the dangers that children face as a result of prostitution are both immediate and long term. Most immediate is the physical, mental and emotional violence that these once innocent children experience at the hands of pimps, madams and customers. Long-term dangers include health problems, drug addictions, adverse psychological effects and even death; and

WHEREAS, the most tangible consequence for children involved in prostitution is the extremely high probability of suffering violent assault. Prostituted children are often afraid to report these crimes to law enforcement because they are embarrassed and fearful that the changes would not be taken seriously or that they may be arrested themselves; and

WHEREAS, housing instability, poverty, untreated psychological and emotional problems, substance abuse, educational and vocational failure and major problems at home have all been cited as common precipitating factors in the lives of exploited children; and

WHEREAS, the children's young age, inadequate education and lack of the necessary street sense to survive alone all contribute to them resorting to engaging in exchanging sex for food, money, shelter, drugs or protection; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of Counties and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children have partnered for a national campaign to promote child safety and help prevent the commercial child sexual exploitation; and

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WHEREAS, this national campaign is being launched in Dorchester County to heighten the public awareness of child sexual exploitation and to help give communities across the United States effective strategies and tools to better safeguard their children; and

WHEREAS, the national campaign urges key stakeholders within a community to begin dialogues on topics related to child sexual exploitation and advocating for the prevention of such victimization; and

WHEREAS, local communities are requested to join in demonstrating their commitment to protecting children and to send a clear message to child sexual offenders that the criminal and sexual victimization of children will not be tolerated.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, we, the County Council of Dorchester County, Maryland, by virtue of this resolution, do hereby join the National Association of Counties and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to initiate a campaign dedicated to preventing commercial child sexual exploitation.

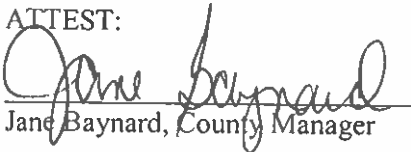
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Dorchester County Council hereby agrees to forward this resolution to the Dorchester County Local Management Board for the best disposition of preventing sexual exploitation in Dorchester County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Dorchester County Council encourages all Council Members and representatives from County departments that share an interest in preventing these crimes against children to join in this effort.

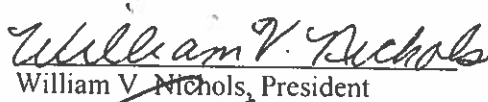
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Dorchester County Council is requested to forward copies of this adopted resolution to the National Association of Counties and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

THIS RESOLUTION IS HEREBY ADOPTED, PASSED AND APPROVED
THIS 1st DAY OF April, 2008.

ATTEST:



Jane Baynard, County Manager


The County Council
of Dorchester County


William V. Nichols, President


Jay L. Newcomb, Vice President


Effie M. Elzey


Rick Price


Risky Travers