

November 21, 2014

Dear Mayor Hales and Portland City Commissioners,

We are a class of college freshman at Warner Pacific College. Through our First Year Learning Community class titled Faith, Justice and Portland and have been learning about the issue of the commercialized sexual exploitation of children in Portland and the massive impact that it has.

Throughout our studies, we have come to see what child sex trafficking industry really is: modern day human slavery. Girls and boys are being taken against their wills and are being forced to commit horrible sexual acts to strange and dangerous people. We cannot let this horrible atrocity continue within our great city and these vulnerable children need our help.

We must not turn a blind eye to the needs of these children who have been taken advantage of. The funding for these vital resources could make a drastic impact on some of the most marginalized persons in our community. If girls had help with recovery and healing from sexual assault, violence, and manipulation, they could live better lives and are less likely to return to the streets. If survivors had beds to return to, just a small place to call home and sleep safely, they could get back on their feet in a healthier environment. And if we could teach more young kids, about the dangers of these relationships that pimps build with young girls and boys, we could kill the problem at the root. The average entry age of a female victim is 12-14 and average age of a male or transgender victim is 11-13. We need to warn and give kids proper, whole person education when they are most vulnerable.

Our class, along with the Warner Pacific College community, urges you to approve Commissioner Fritz's entire budget request for:

- 1) Funding for the Sexual Assault Resource Center and Lifeworks NW's New Options for Women program, to expand case management and culturally specific mentoring of survivors 18 – 25.
- 2) Funding for beds for young people 18 – 25 at the Janus Youth program's Athena House. Currently, if a survivor leaves the program and later wants to return, they can't if they are over 18.
- 3) Creating a "BoysStrength" pilot program and expanding the GirlStrength program run by staff in the Portland Police Bureau, provided to middle school students to teach them appropriate relationship behaviors and what to do if they encounter relationship violence and/or trafficking

Respectfully,

The Warner Pacific College "Faith, Justice and Portland" freshman class