



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE February 11, 2019

Contact: sextraffickingalaska@gmail.com

**Community United for Safety and Protection Media Advisory: Commends
California Senate Bill 233**

The Community United for Safety and Protection commends California for [Senate Bill 233](#) and Hawaii for [House Bill 1517](#), both based on Section 36 of Alaska's SB 91 providing limited immunity from prostitution charges for victims or witnesses reporting heinous crimes. Section 36 was originally written by Senator Berta Gardner and amended into SB 91 by Senator Lesil McGuire and Representative Bob Lynn and was the first legislation of its kind in the United States. Since it's passing, local sex workers have been able to use the immunity to report sex trafficking without fear of arrest. Alaskan sex workers are eager to see the same privilege to report crime extended to sex workers in California and Hawaii.

Section 36 is currently not up for repeal or revision.

This legislative session CUSP is hoping to see legislation to encourage prosecution of crimes against sex workers and put an end to the "open season" on Alaskan sex workers by making a crime victim's status as a sex worker an aggravator. We also hope to see legislation for expungement of prostitution records, which often serve to keep the convicted trapped in sex work. (Listen to Amy's story here: <http://sextraffickingalaska.com/amy-a-lifelong-sentence/>)

"If the public is really concerned about helping sex trade workers exit to another occupation they should clear a path for people to do so," said Kat McElroy, a board member of CUSP. "The mere arrests on one's record, let alone a prostitution conviction, creates barriers to access legal employment which acts as a lifelong scarlet

letter. We ask the legislature to take action to remedy this by creating a way to expunge everyone's records".

A complete account of CUSP's 2019 policy agenda, and explanation of past legislation, can be found here: <http://sextraffickingalaska.com/new-policy-booklet/>

Community United For Safety And Protection (CUSP) is a group of current and former sex workers, sex trafficking victims, and our allies, working towards safety and protection for all people in Alaska's sex industry.

###