

Arguments “Against” Proposition 313

Arizonans should reject the Prop 313. This is an extreme measure based on an emotional and unscientific response to a situation rather than developing an evidence-based plan to protect the most vulnerable among us.

Sex trafficking is a term applied to a wide variety of actions and is generally presented in the media in ways that create confusion and obscurification.

What is needed is a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the problem so it can be addressed intelligently. That calls for research, adequate resources for community-wide education and preventive programs, and proven deterrence activities.

What is not needed are actions by those who find value in sensationalizing this problem, such as legislators trying to enhance their image by devising “tough on crime” responses to complex issues that fail to consider the intricacies involved.

Measures such as this bill lead the public to believe the problem has been adequately addressed when in fact it is simply a glib, poorly thought-out “solution” that will not enhance the safety of children.

Arizona already has severe punishments for such crimes involving many years in prison, making lifetime punishment unnecessary. In addition, the deterrent value of such stiff punishment has long been doubted. The federal government’s National Institute of Justice has found that severe punishment has only limited effectiveness in discouraging crime since those who commit offenses do not know, let alone keep in mind, the penalties for specific offenses.

This proposition should be rejected, and legislators urged to deal with the issue based on science, not emotion.

Arizonans for Rational Sex Offense Laws (AZRSOL) advocates for fact-based legislation which safeguards our communities without infringing on constitutional rights and we endeavor to forge a more rational, humane, and evidence-based approach to sexual offense policy. Go to www.azrsol.org to get the facts.

Patricia Borden, Director, Arizonans for Rational Sex Offense Laws, Phoenix

The League of Women Voters of Arizona strongly opposes Proposition 313, which seeks to establish a life sentence for individuals convicted of a Class 2 felony for child sex trafficking in Arizona. Currently, the state law allows for a range of sentences depending on the age of the child involved, with up to 10 to 24 years for a first-time offense involving children aged 15 to 17 and a minimum of 13 years for those under 15 under the dangerous crimes against children sentencing statute.

The League argues against mandatory minimum sentencing, advocating for judges to have discretion to consider individual circumstances such as role in the offense, mental health,

remorse, addiction, and background. In cases such as child sex trafficking, victims of sex trafficking are often charged with trafficking offenses due to coercion by their abusers. We cannot codify a law that would subject victims to mandatory minimum sentences.

Thus, the League opposes Proposition 313 for shifting sentencing decisions from judges to prosecutors, allowing prosecutors to decide whether to charge someone with a mandatory-eligible offense, effectively removing power from judges. Sentencing decisions should remain within the purview of judges to ensure fair and balanced justice.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ARIZONA URGES YOU TO VOTE NO

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