



Massachusetts
Attorney General
Maura Healey



City of Boston
Mayor
Martin J. Walsh

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS THE CITY OF BOSTON

July 9, 2015

VIA EMAIL

Carl Ferrer
Backpage.com LLC
2501 Oak Lawn Avenue
Dallas, TX 75219

Re: Human Trafficking on Backpage.com

Dear Mr. Ferrer,

We are writing to formally urge Backpage.com to remove your adult services section.

Sex trafficking is a serious and widespread problem, causing significant physical, psychological, and financial harm—especially to women and children. The Internet has had a profound effect on the sex trade and intensified the problem of human trafficking.

Backpage.com has become an increasingly popular vehicle for the trafficking of women and children for sex. In fact, the vast majority of the cases that we have seen prosecuted under human trafficking law, plus a number of additional investigations, involve crimes facilitated by advertisements on Backpage.com. Traffickers advertise women and children on Backpage.com, often multiple times per day and in multiple locations, and hide behind coded communication and anonymous transactions. The result is that women and children are sold for sex hundreds or thousands of times, while their traffickers are shielded from detection and prosecution.

You have it within your power to take a stand. Craigslist, when confronted with similar circumstances a few years ago, chose to voluntarily remove the adult section of its site.

Over the years, your company has made many public representations about its efforts to combat sex trafficking. Those efforts to prevent this exploitation have largely failed, as your site remains the central online haven for the facilitation of the commercial sex trade. That is why we hope you will now take action to remove the adult services section completely, once and for all.

Please feel free to contact Deborah Bercovitch, head of the Attorney General's Human Trafficking Division, with any questions at 617-963-2810. We look forward to the company's cooperation in our fight against the exploitation of people across our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Healey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Maura Healey
Massachusetts Attorney General

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Martin Walsh', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Martin Walsh
Mayor, City of Boston