



Massachusetts  
Attorney General  
Maura Healey



City of Boston Mayor  
Martin J. Walsh

# THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS THE CITY OF BOSTON

March 19, 2015

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
U.S. Senate Majority Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## **Re: S. 178, the *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015***

Dear Leader McConnell:

We write to urge you and your colleagues to adopt the Senator Patrick J. Leahy amendment to S. 178, the *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015*, which would allow S. 178 to advance to the Senate floor for a full membership vote. This critical bill would provide funding for services to help human trafficking victims, as well as stricter penalties for traffickers. The fact that it has stalled because of abortion politics is very disconcerting.

The Human Trafficking Unit in the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office takes a collaborative approach to addressing the issue through prosecutions, investigations, victim services and policy initiatives. The City of Boston works collaboratively with city officials, organizations and the CEASE Network to reduce the demand of sex purchasing by at least 20 percent by criminalizing buyers and providing support services to those who are trafficked. The Attorney General's Office and the City of Boston are partners in our efforts to combat human trafficking.

Through our work, we have seen far too many young victims preyed upon and exploited by human traffickers. We know that trafficking affects people of all walks of life in neighborhoods across our country. Victims have often suffered through child abuse at a young age, struggled with drug addiction, and lived in foster care settings. They are the most vulnerable among us and desperately need an array of services, ranging from mental health counseling to housing.

S. 178 would help survivors of trafficking by funding those critical services, but it is being held hostage by Republican Senators who insist on keeping anti-abortion language in the text.

To play abortion politics with a bill designed to help survivors of human trafficking is unconscionable. Helping these brave survivors and holding offenders accountable should be above politics, and we urge Senate Republicans

to remove the language at issue and immediately vote on the bill. Trafficking survivors deserve our help right now.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if your office has any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Healey".

Maura Healey  
Massachusetts Attorney General

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Martin Walsh".

Martin Walsh  
Mayor, City of Boston

CC: The Honorable Elizabeth Warren  
The Honorable Edward Markey