

MESSAGING GUIDE: SAFE HARBOR LAWS

How to Use This Messaging Guide

Advocates looking to advance Safe Harbor Laws can help raise awareness by writing and publishing op-eds, blogs, or letters to the editor. These are all great ways to engage a broad audience, respond to an opposing point of view in the public forum, and highlight key information for potential supporters. **You can use the following messages to effectively write op-eds, blogs, and letters to the editor about passing or strengthening a Safe Harbor Law in your state.**

Key Points

- ▶ Child survivors of trafficking should not be treated as criminals.
- ▶ Safe Harbor Laws help ensure that we are treating child survivors of trafficking with the dignity and care they deserve.
- ▶ Our Jewish values teach us *Kavod Ha'Briot* — respect and dignity for all human beings. This means that we must treat children who have endured the trauma of sexual exploitation with compassion and specialized social services, not criminalization.

Supporting Points

Child survivors of trafficking should not be treated as criminals.

- ▶ Safe Harbor Laws recognize that trafficked children are victims, not criminals.
- ▶ Safe Harbor Laws grant immunity from prosecution for prostitution-related offenses for any child under 18, and utilize safe houses rather than juvenile detention for survivors.
- ▶ While the prostitution of a child is considered human trafficking under US federal law, many states still do not offer legal protections for minor victims or services to care for these severely victimized children. In many cases, trafficked children are treated as criminals or delinquents, further harming the child.

Safe Harbor Laws help ensure that we are treating child survivors of trafficking with the dignity and care they deserve.

- ▶ Safe Harbor Laws ensure access to medical care, safe housing, remedial education, and counseling services.
- ▶ When states enact Safe Harbor Laws, arrested minors are redirected from juvenile delinquency proceedings to child protection proceedings, giving them access to the specialized services they deserve.

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- ▶ NCJW believes every human being, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or any other factor is deserving of full inclusion and equal opportunity. A child who has been sexually exploited does not deserve to be criminalized; we must provide them the support they need to survive and thrive.
- ▶ By passing Safe Harbor Laws, state lawmakers will be doing the holy work of providing services and compassion to survivors of child sex trafficking, treating them with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Pro Tips

- ▶ Make sure to personalize the piece with a relevant story, or your motivations for getting involved in this work.
- ▶ In your piece, make sure to include each of the three key points outlined above, and use the provided supporting points to back up your claims.
- ▶ For further guidance, check out NCJW's tips on writing [op-eds](#), [blogs](#), and [letters to the editor](#).

Questions?

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