

BILL SIGNED BY GOVERNOR RELATING TO AGE AND SEX ADVERTISEMENTS



The Governor, Chris Gregoire, just signed a bill on Thursday which basically goes after advertising companies that do not require identification as a way of verifying the age of individuals who are placed in advertisements that have to do with sex. These advertising companies could be placing someone under the age of 18 in a sexual-related advertisement that is placed online or even in print advertisements and the governor wants that to stop. This was just one of the many bills Gregoire said he would be signing on Thursday and a good portion of these laws had to do with sex trafficking. Gregorie says that if companies want to continue making profits, they need to use the proper identification techniques to ensure they are not selling sex while using the face of any minors. Otherwise, these companies will face serious consequences. The law also says that if an advertising company releases sexual advertisements that have to do with children, criminal prosecution will ensue. One of the advertising companies that are being targeted is Backpage.com. This website is known for being an online website that pertains to sexual escorts. The website does not require identification for the individuals who are depicted in advertisements all over the websites pages. The parent company for the website, Village Voice Media, owns an assortment of newspapers, such as the Seattle Weekly. The only difference is that Seattle Weekly actually requires identification before depicting individuals in sexual advertisements. It is believed that Village Voice Media earns over \$22 million dollars each year on its sexual-related advertisements alone. The company has not disputed these comments so it is believed that the estimates are quite accurate. In the meantime, one of the anti-sex trafficking groups, Shared Hope International, created a list of different occasions in which underage girls were offered to have sex on Backpage.com, most of which have taken place in the last year alone. And, the Seattle Police Department says they have found over 20 cases of child prostitution within the past two years, all of which came from escort service advertisements on Backpage.com. However, Village Voice Media claims that the website works with law enforcement, letting them know when they are suspicious of possible child sex trafficking on the website. Aside from this bill, the governor signed many other bills into law which would crack down on the people who currently profit from a minor engaging in sexual acts, along with those who are using different tactics to lure minors away from different areas, specifically bus stops, with the purpose of sex trafficking in mind. The laws are set to crack down on these individuals and these acts so that the minors can finally get the justice they deserve.

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