

Resolution No.24

Submitted by:

The Honorable Michael McGinn  
Mayor of Seattle

The Honorable Sam Adams  
Mayor of Portland, OR

The Honorable Michael Bloomberg  
Mayor of New York City

The Honorable Tim Leavitt  
Mayor of Vancouver

The Honorable Edwin M. Lee  
Mayor of San Francisco

The Honorable Pete Lewis  
Mayor of Auburn

The Honorable John Marchione  
Mayor of Redmond

The Honorable Lori C. Moseley  
Mayor of Miramar

The Honorable Michael Nutter  
Mayor of Philadelphia

The Honorable Annise Parker  
Mayor of Houston

The Honorable Jerry Sanders  
Mayor of San Diego

The Honorable Pedro E. Segarra  
Mayor of Hartford

The Honorable Paul Soglin  
Mayor of Madison

The Honorable Marilyn Strickland  
Mayor of Tacoma

The Honorable Antonio R. Villaraigosa  
Mayor of Los Angeles

### **REGARDING THE TRAFFICKING OF MINORS**

1. **WHEREAS**, human trafficking remains a daunting challenge to governments and communities across America and the world; and
2. **WHEREAS**, according to studies by the University of Pennsylvania and Shared Hope International, children numbering in the hundreds of thousands are trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation in cities throughout America; and
3. **WHEREAS**, human trafficking victims are often not identified as trafficking victims or are often mischaracterized as criminal offenders; and
4. **WHEREAS**, among those are victims brought into the United States under false pretenses, and coerced into commercial sexual exploitation; and
5. **WHEREAS**, according to the Children Community Intervention Project, here in the United States, the average age of first exploitation through prostitution is 13, and 75 percent of minors exploited through prostitution have a pimp; and
6. **WHEREAS**, the advent of the Internet has made the sex trafficking of minors easier for those who sell children for sex; and
7. **WHEREAS**, the people who exploit these children for their own profit regularly use online classified advertisements as a way to offer children for sale in cities across an entire region, simultaneously; and
8. **WHEREAS**, the most prominent of these classified services, Backpage.com, owned by the Village Voice Media corporation, operates hundreds of classified services in cities and towns in all 50 states; and
9. **WHEREAS**, across the United States, local papers and websites link to Backpage.com, and other like classified service providers that create additional avenues for the commercial sexual exploitation of minors; and
10. **WHEREAS**, despite the documented evidence of numerous cases of children being trafficked on Backpage.com, the service's parent company has repeatedly refused to institute measures that would effectively address the issue of the sex trafficking of minors; and
11. **WHEREAS**, in response, the City of Seattle ceased advertising in the *Seattle Weekly*, a publication owned by Village Voice Media; and

12. **WHEREAS**, the State of Washington recently created a new law that makes advertising the commercial sexual abuse of a minor a felony offense, and requires advertisers to verify the age of the person being advertised; and
13. **WHEREAS**, Connecticut and other states have recently introduced similar legislation; and
14. **WHEREAS**, a wide range of Americans, from elected officials and advocates to journalists and clergy, has called on Backpage.com and other classified services to change their practices,
15. **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that The United States Conference of Mayors calls on Backpage.com and other classified services nationwide to implement in person age verification and end the sale of children through their services; and
16. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The United States Conference of Mayors calls on Congress, state legislatures, and local elected bodies to pass legislation to address commercial advertising over the Internet for sexual abuse of minors.
17. Projected Cost: Unknown