



King County

Metropolitan King County Council

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May 24, 2012

The Honorable Dow Constantine
King County Executive
401 5th Avenue, #800
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Executive Constantine,

We are writing today to request that you set aside approximately \$750,000 unspent Veterans and Human Services Levy funds to address the problem of human trafficking here in King County. Of the millions of remaining unspent levy funds, we are asking that approximately \$750,000 be set aside in 2012 and in 2013 to support an anti human trafficking public information campaign, training of law enforcement, Metro drivers and other county personnel that have contact with the public on identifying victims of human trafficking, along with programs that provide rescue and recovery services for victims of human trafficking. The sum of approximately \$750,000 is based on early staff estimates for launching a training campaign for first responders and Metro drivers, and to provide resources for rescue and recovery services for victims of human trafficking.

As you know, recently a motion was put forward calling on you and the Transit Division to develop and implement a public awareness campaign addressing of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of minors. This motion, co-sponsored by Councilmembers Gossett, Phillips, and Lambert, calls upon you and the Transit Division to utilize county resources to address the growing problem of human trafficking in our region. As a hub of global travel that includes a port city, King County is a prime location for human trafficking. Other jurisdictions such as the cities of Los Angeles, Boston, and Indianapolis have launched successful focused human trafficking awareness campaigns involving transit. Building community awareness in the very places where these young people are most susceptible – on buses and transit locations is crucial.

It is also our belief that bringing together elected officials, law enforcement officials, transit officials and other community leaders to address this issue in a more serious way is something worth investigating. The numbers of families and children affected by this crisis are staggering and this issue needs addressing. The time to act is now.

Human trafficking is largely invisible to most citizens, but as far back as 2001, the US Department of Justice estimated that more than 250,000 American youth were at risk of becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Here in King County, 300-500 children are estimated to be prostituted on an annual basis. The average age of entry for female prostitutes in the United States is between 12 and 14 years, and

children 12 and older are targeted for exploitation by criminal gangs. Here in King County, we've had commercially sex trafficked minor cases involving children as young as 11 being sold.

The international focus on human trafficking is intensifying, and especially so in our region. In March, Governor Gregoire signed 11 bills that make Washington one of the toughest states in the prosecution of human trafficking cases. Also in March, the US Attorney's Office, in cooperation with our Prosecuting Attorney's office, successfully prosecuted a sex trafficking case resulting in an exceptional 15 year sentence for the pimp, found guilty of using force and coercion to sell young women and underage girls. The National Attorneys General Conference here in March highlighted the need for more training of police and other first responders in the identification of human trafficking victims. Finally, support for rescue and recovery programs that give victims access to shelter, food, counseling and legal advocacy are needed.

Therefore, we urge you to set aside approximately \$750,000 of the Veterans and Human Services Levy unspent Levy funds to support King County's growing efforts to combat human trafficking. Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to talking more about it with you and your staff.

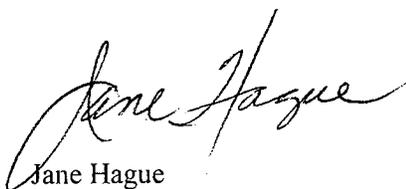
Best Regards,



Reagan Dunn
King County Councilmember – District 9



Kathy Lambert
King County Councilmember – District 3



Jane Hague
King County Councilmember – District 6