

U.S. Rep. Sensenbrenner: House passes Sensenbrenner-backed bill to fight online sex trafficking

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Washington, D.C.— On a bipartisan vote of 388 to 25, the House of Representatives passed the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA), which Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (WI-05) co-sponsored. FOSTA creates a new federal statute with increased penalties for sex traffickers online. It also amends the Communications Decency Act to permit local and state prosecutions of offending websites.

Rep. Sensenbrenner: “This bill puts victims of online sex trafficking first. It will shut down websites that profit from this abhorrent crime and send the criminals who run them to jail. It is important we let survivors of sex trafficking know they are not alone and justice will be served.”

Specifically, FOSTA:

- Ensures that victims of sex trafficking are able to sue malicious websites that violate federal law regarding online sex trafficking
- Clarifies that section 230 of the Communications Decency Act does not grant immunity to websites that advertise, solicit, or facilitate online sex trafficking
- Creates a new federal statute that allows law enforcement to prosecute websites that have the intent to promote or facilitate illegal prostitution
- Increases penalties that prosecutors can seek against websites that promote the illegal prostitution of 5 or more persons

- Gives state and local authorities the ability to enforce the new sex trafficking statutes