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## COMMON MYTHS ABOUT COMMERCIAL SEX

### 1. Myth: Child Sex Trafficking is not happening in the United States.

**Fact:** Domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST), which is the commercial sexual exploitation of children through buying, selling, or trading their sexual services, is happening in the United States. Forms of DMST include prostitution, pornography, stripping and other sexual acts.<sup>1</sup>

**Fact:** At least 100,000 American children are being exploited through pornography or prostitution every year.<sup>2</sup>

**Fact:** Pimps commonly sell minor girls for \$400 an hour or more on America's streets.

### 2. Myth: Women and girls choose a life of prostitution.

**Fact:** Traffickers and pimps use physical, emotional and psychological abuse to coerce young women and girls into a life in sex trafficking. They often use "lover-boys" to recruit girls from middle schools and high schools.<sup>3</sup>

**Fact:** The average age a child is first exploited through prostitution is 13 years old. If the child is a minor, they cannot legally consent to having sex.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Myth: Only a small percentage of people view child pornography or purchase kids for sex.

**Fact:** 1 out of every 5 pornographic images is of a child; and 55% of child pornography comes from the U.S.<sup>5</sup>

**Fact:** The sale of child pornography in the U.S. has become more than a \$3 billion annual industry.<sup>6</sup>

### 4. Myth: Pornography isn't harmful to me or anyone else.

**Fact:** In a study of 932 sex addicts, 90% of the men, and 77% of the women indicated that looking at pornography "played a significant role in their addiction."<sup>7</sup>

**Fact:** According to the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, pornography use leads to: diminished trust between intimate couples, belief that promiscuity is the natural state, belief that marriage is sexually confining, and lack of attraction to family and child-raising.<sup>8</sup>

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