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**To:** Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety  
**From:** Rights Not Rescue WI  
**Date:** December 15, 2021  
**Re:** In Support of AB185 - Safe Harbor Legislation

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Dear Chairperson Spiros and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on AB185, an important piece of proposed legislation that will help protect vulnerable children in Wisconsin. Rights Not Rescue WI is a grassroots advocacy organization that aims to protect and support commercial sex workers, trafficking survivors, and people harmed and stigmatized by the criminalization of the sex trade in Wisconsin. We believe that full decriminalization of sex work is necessary in order to ensure consenting adults have the rights and opportunities to survive and thrive how they best see fit.

The Senate Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety held a hearing and passed a concurrent Safe Harbor bill, SB185, out of committee in October. We urge you to schedule a public hearing on AB185 and pass it as soon as possible. In line with our view that sex work should be fully decriminalized, and in light of known racial disparities in policing practices and prostitution arrests, we also urge the Committee to consider amending the proposed bill to repeal statutes 944.31(1) and 944.33 in addition to 944.30 (1m), which protects children from being prosecuted for the crime of prostitution.

Children should not be arrested for nor charged with prostitution. No one should be arrested nor charged with prostitution. Children who are victims of sexual assault at the hands of adults should be protected--not further harmed. Adults who engage in consensual sex work, and the conditions in which they work, should be protected--not further harmed. Sex trafficking is NOT sex work and we vehemently oppose harm to children and any criminalization of victims of sexual assault and trafficking.

**Though the Safe Harbor bill before you could and should go further to protect children from criminalization, we support Assembly Bill 185 as part of a broader movement towards the full decriminalization of sex work.** Full decriminalization is proven to vastly improve the lives of trafficking victims and adults who participate in sex work. Rights Not Rescue WI is looking forward to progressive and pragmatic solutions that will actually help people instead of compounding more injury and trauma unnecessarily. Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.

Respectfully,

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