

A9214/S8609 VICTIM PROTECTION AND CHILD SEX BUYER ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

A9214/S8609 treats all minors under 18 as victims if they're involved in commercial sex, strengthens penalties for adult buyers, and better reflects how modern trafficking works. It's a survivor-informed, trauma-aware approach to ending child sexual exploitation in New York.

What the Bill Does:

- **Strengthens protections for minors (under 18) in New York State who are victims of sexual exploitation.**
- **Closes dangerous loopholes in New York State law that currently leave 15- to 17-year-old minors unprotected from commercial sexual exploitation.**
- **Ensures that all minors under 18 are fully covered by prostitution-related statutes.**
- **Brings New York in line with federal law and the vast majority other states, which already consider anyone under 18 involved in commercial sex to be a victim of trafficking.**
- **Updates the statute on “compelling prostitution” to reflect modern trafficking dynamics, including manipulation, psychological coercion, and abuse of trust—tactics frequently used in "boyfriend" or grooming-based exploitation.**

Why We Need to Fix this Loophole in NY State Law

- **Currently in New York, adults who pay for sex with 15-, 16-, or 17-year-olds do not face felony charges.**
- **The bill helps eliminate adultification bias—the tendency to see children of color as older or less innocent.**
- **Gives police and prosecutors clearer tools to go after online exploitation and trafficking. This loophole makes it nearly impossible to hold adults who are buying 15 to 17 year olds for sex accountable for their actions.**
- **Shifts blame and accountability away from exploited youth and onto the adults who abuse or traffic them.**