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August 25, 2016

The Honorable Jerry Brown  
Governor of California  
State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 1322 (Mitchell) Commercial sex acts: minors**  
**AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Governor Brown:

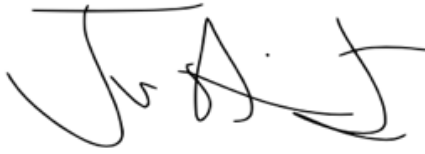
The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing 5,000 California pediatricians strongly supports SB 1322 (Mitchell). SB 1322 would make provisions criminalizing acts of prostitution inapplicable to minors, as well as provide that commercially sexually exploited children may be taken into temporary custody and adjudged dependents of the court.

Thousands of children and youth fall victim to commercial sexual exploitation in the United States every year. Though legally considered victims of human trafficking, these children are all too often incarcerated for crimes in which they themselves were the victims. Their incarceration and criminal prosecution not only further traumatizes these abused and exploited children, but also makes it less likely that they will receive the services they need to heal their physical and emotional wounds. This, in turn, increases the likelihood that they will return to illegal and dangerous ways of life after leaving the justice system. As stated in 2015 in the journal *Pediatrics*, “Involvement in the juvenile justice system as an offender vastly decreases the likelihood that the child victim will receive critical services and protection and may lead to further trauma, including reentry into trafficking and involvement in other high-risk behaviors.”

SB 1322 would help to remedy this injustice by decriminalizing the coerced behaviors of sexually exploited minors so that they are treated as the victims they are, rather than as criminals. This would help ensure access to much-needed rehabilitative services such as medical and psychological care, while simultaneously freeing up law enforcement to focus on these children’s exploiters.

Pediatricians, therefore, respectfully urge you to sign SB 1322 and thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Jones'.

Justin Jones, M.D.  
Senior Policy Analyst  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: Stuart Cohen, AAP-CA Chair; Lydia Bourne, AAP-CA Legislative Advocate; AAP-CA Leadership