



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 4.17.18

CONTACT: SENATOR MIZELL

PHONE: 985.839.3936

**SENATOR MIZELL PROMOTES LEGISLATION TO DISCOURAGE SOLICITATION
FOR COMMERCIAL SEX AND PROTECT VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

SENATE BILL 335 MOVES TO HOUSE FOR DEBATE

At the urging of District 12 State Senator Beth Mizell, the Louisiana State Senate approved Senate Bill 335 to discourage the solicitation of prostitution, decrease harm to prostituted persons and curb sex trafficking in Louisiana. SB 335, which was approved without opposition, increases the fines for the purchase of commercial sexual activity.

“Senate Bill 335 is based on policy that has worked in several other states,” said Senator Mizell. “It is a way for us to lessen the demand as we work to help the victims of sex trafficking in Louisiana. This bill increases the fines that sex buyers will pay if found guilty of soliciting prostitution. The revenues from the increased fines will then be used to provide additional training for law enforcement in identifying victims of sex trafficking and also to assist in programs for victim recovery.”

The measure is modeled after the “Buyer Beware” program started in the state of Washington. Historically, the women participating in prostitution were the ones to pay the price for commercial sexual activity. This measure, like the Buyer Beware program, aims to discourage solicitation, facilitate exit from prostitution, and better protect the victims of sex trafficking.

“Prostitution is not a victimless-crime,” added Senator Mizell. “So many young women are coerced into prostitution at an early age and face many barriers to escaping the industry. It is my hope that this measure will better prevent commercial sexual activity.”

Senate Bill 335 now moves to the House of Representatives for approval. To learn more about this proposal and Senator Mizell’s other bills, visit www.legis.la.gov.

###