

October 5, 2022

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of the State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: SB 357 (Wiener)

Dear Governor Newsom,

The City Council of National City urges the amendment of Senate Bill 357, which is harming our community by giving sex buyers, human traffickers and pimps the freedom to victimize women and children without fear of consequence. SB 357 benefits sex buyers who perpetuate sexual violence against children and vulnerable community members.

Identifying victims of human trafficking is a difficult and time-consuming task for law enforcement. Loitering investigations by law enforcement are key components in stopping sex trafficking and identifying those who would exploit children. Officers rely on loitering arrests which often that lead to serious convictions for traffickers and pimps.

The repeal or amendment of this bill will also send a message of support and care to working-class neighborhoods and small businesses in National City. We are advocating for our community so that our families and businesses will not be forced to tolerate an increase in prostitution leaving them powerless as they will feel less safe. In anticipation of SB357 becoming law in 2023, the prostitution activity that our community is currently experiencing is extreme compared to previous years.

Instead of legalizing loitering to commit prostitution which benefits buyers and exploiters, we are asking legislators to consider other alternatives such as providing human trafficking victims exit strategies that include housing, employment, mental health services and case management. Law enforcement should be allowed to continue loitering investigations with the goal of identifying and rescuing victims of human trafficking.

Sincerely,

Alejandra Sotelo-Solis
Mayor of National City