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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend title 18, United States Code, to clarify and expand the prohibition on coercion and enticement to include patronizing or soliciting a minor for a commercial sex act, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. NEHLS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend title 18, United States Code, to clarify and expand the prohibition on coercion and enticement to include patronizing or soliciting a minor for a commercial sex act, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Preventing Trafficking
5 of Minors Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO COERCION AND ENTICEMENT**
2 **STATUTE.**

3 Section 2422 of title 18, United States Code, is
4 amended—

5 (1) in subsection (b), by striking “Whoever,
6 using the mail or any facility or means of interstate
7 or foreign commerce, or within the special maritime
8 and territorial jurisdiction of the United States
9 knowingly persuades, induces, entices, or coerces any
10 individual who has not attained the age of 18 years,
11 to engage in prostitution or any sexual activity for
12 which any person can be charged with a criminal of-
13 fense, or attempts to do so” and inserting the fol-
14 lowing:

15 “Whoever, using the mail or any facility or means
16 of interstate or foreign commerce (including the telephone
17 or internet), or within the special maritime and territorial
18 jurisdiction of the United States, knowingly—

19 “(1) persuades, induces, entices, or coerces any
20 individual who has not attained the age of 18 years
21 to engage in a commercial sex act or any sexual ac-
22 tivity for which any person can be charged with a
23 criminal offense;

24 “(2) engages in a commercial sex act with a
25 minor;

1 “(3) solicits, offers to patronize, or patronizes a
2 minor for a commercial sex act;

3 “(4) pays, agrees to pay, or offers to pay any
4 person for the purpose of engaging in a commercial
5 sex act with a minor;

6 “(5) enters or remains in a place with the in-
7 tent to engage in a commercial sex act with a minor;
8 or

9 “(6) attempts to commit any offense described
10 in paragraphs (1) through (5) of this subsection”;
11 and

12 (2) by adding at the end the following:

13 “(c) **KNOWLEDGE OF AGE.**—It is not a defense that
14 the defendant did not know the victim’s age or reasonably
15 believed the victim to be 18 years of age or older. If the
16 defendant had a reasonable opportunity to observe the vic-
17 tim, the Government need not prove that the defendant
18 knew that the victim was under 18 years of age.

19 “(d) **NO REQUIREMENT OF FORCE, FRAUD, OR CO-**
20 **ERCION.**—Proof of force, threats of force, fraud, or coer-
21 cion is not required if the victim is a minor.

22 “(e) **NO DEFENSE BASED ON LAW ENFORCEMENT**
23 **INVOLVEMENT.**—It shall not be a defense to prosecution
24 under this section that the purported minor was, in fact,
25 an undercover law enforcement officer or an individual

1 acting at the direction of law enforcement representing
2 themselves as a minor.

3 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

4 “(1) the term ‘commercial sex act’ has the
5 meaning given that term in section 1591(e)(3);

6 “(2) the term ‘minor’ means a person under 18
7 years of age; and

8 “(3) the term ‘sex act’ has the meaning given
9 the term ‘sexual act’ in section 2246(2), and in-
10 cludes sexual contact as defined in section
11 2246(3).”; and

12 (3) in subsection (b), as amended by paragraph
13 (1), by striking “shall be fined under this title and
14 imprisoned not less than 10 years or for life” and
15 inserting “shall be fined under this title and impris-
16 oned not less than 10 years (or 15 years if the
17 minor is under 14 years of age) or for life”.

18 **SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

19 This Act shall take effect 180 days after the date of
20 enactment and shall apply to offenses committed on or
21 after that date.

22 **SEC. 4. SEVERABILITY.**

23 If any provision of this Act, or the application of such
24 provision to any person or circumstance, is held to be un-
25 constitutional, the remainder of this Act, and the applica-

1 tion of the provisions of this Act to any other person or
2 circumstance, shall not be affected thereby.