

NAACP NEWS

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



GEORGIA NAACP CHANGES POSITIONS ON CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 2 *Support for Exploited Children Outweigh Concerns Regarding Additional Regressive Tax and Spend Powers*

ATLANTA -- Four constitutional amendments are facing Georgia voters in this November's general elections. Each of the Constitutional measures are being decided based on a yes-or-no vote. The Georgia NAACP had previously announced opposition to all four constitutional amendments announced today a change to its policy position on Constitutional Amendment 2.

"Today, we encourage our members, units, and the community to Vote Yes only on Amendment 2. Specifically, Amendment 2 will trigger the implementation of Senate Resolution 7 and allow the state legislature to provide for additional penalties or fees to a court case in which a person is found guilty "of keeping a place of prostitution, pimping, pandering, pandering by compulsion, solicitation of sodomy, masturbation for hire, trafficking of persons for sexual servitude, or sexual exploitation of children. The Georgia NAACP fully supports that initiative. Although those changes don't require a Constitutional Amendment and additional tax and spend powers to the General Assembly and a already too powerful Governor; support for sexual exploited children is too critical" said Francys Johnson, Statesboro Attorney and Georgia NAACP State President.

While Amendment 1 and 3 has been the subject of large scale discussion across the state, many voters are not familiar with the other measures - or exactly what they represent. Georgia currently does not allow any form of citizen initiated ballot measures, so all ballot measures must be referred by the legislature.

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"The Georgia NAACP is the state's oldest and largest civil rights organization and its support is critical for those citizens that respect and listen to its message. As such, I am thankful for this policy position change. Specifically, thousands of Georgia's children become victims of human sex trafficking each year with the highest percentage being that of African Americans at 40%" said Dee Dawkins-Haigler, (D - Lithonia), Chair of the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus.

The change to the Georgia NAACP's policy position was welcomed by other child advocate groups including the Interfaith Children's Movement.

"As a former juvenile court judge who saw the devastation caused to children who have been victimized by human trafficking and as a Georgia citizen who has 'fought this battle" for more than 16 years, I urge all citizens of good conscience to support this "once in a lifetime" opportunity to have consistent funding for services for survivors; it is the least we can do on behalf of children who have been exploited and abused by adults who should have protected them" said Nina Hickson, former Fulton County Chief Juvenile Court Judge.

"Supporting amendment 2 will provide dedicated funds to assist the victims who have fallen prey to sexual predators. Yet, it will take more political courage from our elected leadership ensuring the fund is administered properly. Additionally, there must be more support from both the private, faith, non-profit, and public sectors to eradicate this appalling condition in which we find too many of our children languishing" said Johnson.

Background

Senate Bill 8

Senate Bill 8, or Safe Harbor/Rachel's Law Act, was introduced in the Georgia State Legislature on December 12, 2014, and was signed into law on May 5, 2015. The bill called for the creation of the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund as well as the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund Commission and stipulated that its conditions would not take effect without passage of a constitutional amendment that provided a funding mechanism for the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund in the legislature as well as ratification of the amendment by voters during the November 2016 election. This companion amendment legislation was Senate Resolution 7.

Fund

According to the text of Senate Bill 8, The Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund is a separate fund in the Georgia State Treasury and its primary purpose "is to disburse money to provide care and rehabilitative and social services for sexually exploited children.

For more information about the work of the Georgia NAACP, please visit our website at www.naacpga.org.

Founded in 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. The Georgia NAACP has had an unbroken presence in Georgia since 1917. The Georgia NAACP maintains a network of branches throughout Georgia, from cities to small rural counties. The Georgia NAACP has been the most effective and consistent advocates for civil and human rights in Georgia.