

The Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould
Minister of Justice

Dear Minister:

I am writing to express my concern that our government allows the online advertiser Backpage.com to operate their adult services section in Canada, when it is well known that Backpage profits from sex trafficking, particularly the trafficking of minors. A 2016 ECPAT International study found that sex traffickers easily advertise their victims online, mostly through Backpage.

The online advertising of victims of sex trafficking – primarily through Backpage - is common in every urban centre across Canada, large or small.

Recently, Backpage voluntarily shutdown their adult services section in the United States, in response to a US Senate Subcommittee report that revealed Backpage was complicit in online sex trafficking.

Could you take the following steps to help reduce sex trafficking in Canada?

First, please make a formal request to Backpage to shut down the adult services section on Backpage.com's Canadian websites, as they have in the United States.

Second, please examine the government's options in preventing or prohibiting websites from hosting and profiting from sex trafficking. Please strengthen the laws around sexual advertising, profiting from sexual exploitation and obscenity.

Third, please ensure that the existing offence of advertising sexual services, s. 286.4 in the *Criminal Code*, is enforced and that offending companies face prosecution.

Eliminating the ability of companies like Backpage to provide a platform for sex trafficking ads and profit from exploitation is another important step in the fight to end sexual exploitation.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,