



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 5

**COUNCILMEMBER CATHY MOORE**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FROM THE OFFICE OF:**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Councilmember Moore announces new legislation to crack down on commercial sexual exploitation fueling gun violence**

**SEATTLE** – Seattle City Councilmember [Cathy Moore](#) (District 5) announced new legislation today aimed at cracking down on commercial sexual exploitation and rampant and escalating gun violence associated with it.

“We need to disrupt right now the commercial sexual exploitation ecosystem that is driving gun violence on and near Aurora. We need this for the safety of our neighborhoods, our school kids, our residents and businesses,” said Councilmember Moore.

Aurora Avenue North and adjacent residential neighborhoods have faced a dramatic increase in gun violence over the past few months connected to the sex trade. That includes running gun battles over several blocks and multiple other shootings. In a span of 60 days from mid-May to mid-July, there were 31 shooting incidents in the area, according to SPD, and several more since then.

According to Principal Stowell of Robert Eagle Staff Middle School, people in the sex trade have also been soliciting and recruiting Ingraham High School and Robert Eagle Middle School students.

**How the legislation would work:**

After numerous meetings with survivors of sexual exploitation, community members, small business owners, police, the City Attorney, and service providers, Councilmember Moore has crafted legislation that will take a new approach to commercial sexual exploitation.

The legislation would give police new tools to address the crime by:

1. **Creating a new loitering law** targeting the buyers of commercial sex. Unlike Seattle’s old prostitution loitering law that was repealed in 2020, this legislation provides multiple grounds for arresting buyers whose actions are generating a highly lucrative sex trade; a trade so profitable that it is fueling regular gun battles over turf. As for sellers, the legislation makes clear that diversion, not prosecution, is the preferred approach for people engaging in prostitution.

2. **The legislation includes an entirely new offense** of promoting loitering for purposes of prostitution, to target sex traffickers. This offense is a gross misdemeanor.
3. **Establishing a Stay Out of Area Prostitution (SOAP)** around Aurora Avenue north of North 85<sup>th</sup> Street to North 145<sup>th</sup> Street. This means anyone arrested or convicted of a prostitution related crime could be prohibited by a judge from being in that area with limited exceptions.

## Quotes

“We’ve seen an unacceptable surge in gun violence associated with the sex trade, especially along Aurora Avenue that is impacting the neighborhood and its schools. This legislation is about ensuring that our community is no longer caught in the crossfire. It’s about saving people who are the victims of sex trafficking. It’s about ensuring our police officers have the tools they need to interrupt some of the worst kinds of exploitation and violence. I’m proud to support Councilmember Moore and the effort to make our communities safer,” said **Councilmember [Bob Kettle](#)** (District 7).

““In Seattle we are experiencing an explosion of sex trafficking. Too many women and girls need our focus to escape their terrible situations. And our neighborhoods and communities have borne the brunt of this criminal activity. I applaud Councilmember Moore’s focus on this often neglected issue and on reducing sex trafficking’s association with Seattle’s north end. This legislation will give Seattle another way to target traffickers and intervene in the rampant criminal economy in this neighborhood,” said **Seattle City Attorney Ann Davison**.

“I’ve owned a business on Aurora for 20 years. Right now, our neighborhood is a crime zone, and we’re hurting. We deal daily with the City’s inability to shut down the organized crime groups that have brought drugs and gun violence into the neighborhood, along with sex trafficked women and children. We can’t continue to be complacent. We can’t continue to excuse this as ‘just regular Aurora stuff.’ It’s not. It’s dangerous and it’s wrong. It’s time to do something about it,” said **Dana Mongillo, owner of Fuzzy Buddy’s Dog Daycare**.

“I own a business on Aurora, and my parents have had a business near 100th and Aurora for 30 years. The situation we face today is not normal. Each of us have been victims of violent crime at the hands of people working in the sex trade over the past few months. In April, my mother was hit in the face and head so severely, she had a brain bleed that landed her in the ICU. My parents have had to close their front doors to retail sales and have had their business and livelihood ruined due to the daily violence. We need to urgently pass this law and make Aurora safe for everyone,” said **Jane Chang**.

## Next Steps

This legislation will be heard in the Public Safety Committee on August 13.