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Human-trafficking opponents support fund for victims

By Rosemarie Bernardo

POSTED: 08:49 p.m. HST, Feb 23, 2012

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Opponents of human trafficking are pushing for passage of a Senate measure that would fine "johns" \$5,000 and place the money into a special fund for victims of sex assault and domestic violence.

The Pacific Alliance to Stop Slavery, the International Justice Mission and the Polaris Project held a news conference Thursday at the state Capitol to support the passage of several bills, including Senate Bill 2579, the so-called Safe Harbor Bill.

"It's our hope that the Hawaii legislature will take a firm stand and pass the pieces of legislation that have been introduced by Rep. Karen Awana and Sen. Suzanne Chun Oakland to really set a strong message to traffickers and johns who exploit men, women and children for labor services and for commercial sex," said James Dold, policy counsel for the Polaris Project.

SB 2579 calls for a special fund to be established for minors who are victims of prostitution. It would also ban prosecution of a person under 18 who is suspected or charged with prostitution.

It also targets "johns" with an automatic \$5,000 fine, which would be funneled to a special fund for domestic violence and sex assault, according to Kathryn Xian, executive director of the Pacific Alliance to Stop Slavery. The Senate Ways and Means Committee is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the bill Tuesday.

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FEMA to reimburse Hawaii \$7.48M for APEC costs - 05:06 a.m.

Raising tobacco tax seen as way to prevent smoking - 04:57 a.m.

Father: 'My kid made a mistake' in school shooting - 04:10 a.m.

Moderate earthquakes rattle Kilauea as swarm continues - 10:25 p.m.

Infant dies after van with 7 Japanese tourists crashes - 09:45 p.m.

Female mo-ped driver critically injured in Liliha crash - 09:33 p.m.

Defendant claims an alibi in taxi driver murder trial - 08:44 p.m.

Driver licensing fraud investigation could net more arrests - 08:20 p.m.

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