



ARVADA
United Methodist Church

AUMC’S JUSTICE IN ACTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS A “NO” VOTE ON PROP 133

Approved by committee vote on August 18, 2026

PROPOSITION 133 – Mandating Life in Prison for Anyone Convicted of Child Sex Trafficking

WHAT THIS INITIATIVE WOULD DO

If passed, this initiative would change Colorado statutes to expand the definition of trafficking a child for sexual servitude and would provide that any person convicted of that crime must be sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole or release. Under current law, trafficking a child for sexual servitude is defined as: (1) selling or otherwise knowingly facilitating commercial sexual activity involving a child under the age of 18; or (2) knowingly advertising, offering, or selling travel services that facilitate commercial sexual activity involving a child under the age of 18. The initiative would add a third category: knowingly exchanging anything of monetary value to buy or sell sexual activity with a person under the age of 18.

Under current law, trafficking a child for sexual servitude is a class 2 felony punishable by eight to 24 years in prison. The initiative would make trafficking a child for sexual servitude a class 1 felony, punishable by life in prison without the possibility of parole or release.

[Text of the initiative](#) (formerly Initiative #108)

ARGUMENTS FOR THE INITIATIVE

Proponents argue that the harm done by sexual trafficking of minors is so horrific that those who engage in it should never be considered for leniency and should never be able to harm another child again.

Supporters: [Protect Kids Colorado](#)

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE INITIATIVE

Opponents argue that while child sex trafficking is a horrendous crime, current law already provides for sufficient punishment. Judges can decide to lengthen maximum sentences if aggravating factors are present, such as child abuse. In many cases, those who engage in child sex trafficking were themselves trafficked as children. Requiring a mandatory life sentence would take away judicial discretion to address individual circumstances. More tools for sentencing and prevention efforts should be the focus.

Opponents: [National Survivor Network](#)

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

2026 Colorado Election Blue Book – Proposition 133 (mailed to voters)

[Ballotpedia](#)

JUSTICE IN ACTION COMMITTEE POSITION ON THIS INITIATIVE

As a committee and pursuant to a consensus vote, **we oppose this initiative and urge United Methodists to vote against it.**

OUR REASONS FOR THIS POSITION

Our Social Principles call for us to advocate for the safety and protection of children and youth, and to hold accountable those who perpetrate child abuse and endangerment. However, the Social Principles also call for fair and proportional sentencing and a restorative approach to justice. It is very tempting, when a crime victim is a child, to become overwhelmed by anger and a sense that harsh justice is appropriate. Child sex trafficking is an appalling crime that steals the innocence of the victims. In cases involving the most egregious circumstances, a life sentence may well be appropriate.

But the circumstances of these cases are not all the same, and we are tasked with recognizing when our emotions may tempt us to avoid acknowledging these differences. This initiative would treat all child sex trafficking cases as equivalent and requiring equivalent harsh punishment. But a perpetrator who repeatedly traffics minors to adults in the operation of a business is arguably different from an 18-year-old who buys dinner because he or she wants to engage in sexual activity with a 17-year-old. A wealthy, privileged perpetrator is arguably different from a perpetrator who engaged in child sex trafficking because that is the only life he or she has ever known. While our Social Principles call on us to protect children, they also call on us to ensure that our criminal justice system is fair. This initiative does not allow us to do that.

This language of this measure was previously considered as a bill ([HB26-1082](#)) by members of the Colorado General Assembly’s House Judiciary Committee, who voted against it. Instead, the legislature passed [SB 26-015](#), a bipartisan bill that increased sentences for child sex trafficking while incorporating provisions to protect victims, an outcome praised by all sides. Our deliberative legislative process worked well in rejecting this initiative’s language in favor of a better bill, and that outcome should be preserved.

WHAT WE CONSIDERED IN TAKING THIS POSITION

UMC sources considered:

- Relevant provisions of the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church (attached)
- Committee discussions

External sources considered:

- [History](#) and [text](#) of the ballot initiative available from the Colorado Secretary of State
- Fiscal impact statement
- [Ballotpedia resources and analysis](#)
- Reports and analyses:

- Anderson, C. and I. Flores. “[Ballot Initiative 108: Penalties for Human Trafficking of Minors.](#)” Common Sense Institute, August 2026.
- Bell Policy Center. [Colorado Ballot Guide 2026](#), July 2026.
- Media reports:
 - Dean, C. “[Colorado governor signs law with stricter penalties for child human trafficking.](#)” KKTV 11, Colorado Springs, 6/4/26.
 - Toomer, L. “[Measure to increase penalties for child human trafficking will be on Colorado ballot.](#)” Colorado Newslne, 3/10/26.
 - Bordelon, C. “[Colorado lawmakers weigh bipartisan bill seeking mandatory minimum sentences for child sex trafficking crimes.](#)” Denver7, 2/9/26, updated 2/11/26.

BUMC SOCIAL PRINCIPLES 2025-28 – EXCERPTS RELEVANT TO PROPOSITION 133

Para. 161 **III. THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY**

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ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

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C. Human Trafficking and Slavery – We condemn human trafficking and slavery as profound violations of the inherent dignity and worth of every person and of their fundamental rights related to autonomy, including the ability of every individual to make personal life choices...

Human trafficking involves the buying and selling of human beings for purposes of forced or indentured labor, including private and commercial sex exploitation. We consider such trafficking to be abhorrent because it violates basic human rights and exploits the vulnerabilities of the weakest members of society. Those who are especially vulnerable include minor children and women, migrants, displaced people, and others living in poverty.

We support the abolition of human trafficking and slavery of any kind. We commit ourselves to work toward the elimination of the social and economic inequities that provide fertile ground for the flourishing of these evils...

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Para. 163 **IV. THE POLITICAL COMMUNITY**

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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C. Restorative Justice – The Gospels place a premium on the restoration of right relationships (Matthew 18:15-20). When relationships are violated or broken through crimes or wrongdoing, such restoration is critically important. We, therefore, urge governments to develop systems that emphasize restorative justice, which requires people who have committed crimes to make amends for their offenses, and allows victims, if they elect to do so, to share with offenders how they have been harmed. Restorative justice seeks to prioritize the victim and the victim’s family. It also seeks to repair damages, right wrongs, and bring healing to the victim, the offender, families, and the community.

We urge congregations, governments, and businesses to support diversion programs that allow those who have committed offenses to receive counseling, education, skills training, community service, and other assistance to help them become fully contributing members of society. We encourage citizens to partner with law enforcement personnel in local community to create alternatives to practices that emphasize retribution rather than restoration.

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E. Criminal Justice –

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We believe that offenders must be held accountable for criminal actions, particularly those that result in a loss of life or livelihood, so we support measures that prevent, deter, or eliminate crimes, and set apart dangerous offenders. While insisting on accountability, we are also committed to fair and proportional sentencing and to the humane treatment of those imprisoned. We strongly support programs in prisons designed to promote rehabilitation and restoration of inmates...

In our communities, we support measures designed to address the root causes of crime, including poverty and the lack of educational opportunities, recreational activities, substance abuse treatment and counseling, mental health services, and job training...

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BASIC RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

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C. Children and Young People. We call on church and society to support and advocate for the well-being of all children and young people and for their safety, nurture, agency, education, and participation in church and community life. We condemn destructive practices of neglect, abuse, abduction, exploitation, human trafficking, use of children in armed conflict, and imprisonment. We recognize that perpetrators of abuse or endangerment are usually in positions of power. We hold them accountable for their actions, whether they are parents and family, teachers, clergy, or congregational or public leaders.

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