

Dear Mr. Feldman,

The faith community is actively engaged in the fight to end modern day slavery in our city. We are well versed in the literature that describes a nearly ironclad correlation between strip clubs and sex trafficking (1-6 below). Strip clubs are essentially the “farm league” for the “major league” of the commercial sex trade, where 70 percent of all trafficking victims are found. (U.S. Department of Justice, Assessment of U.S. Government Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons: 2004). In fact, one of the clubs that helped fund the alliance between strip clubs and the City has been a stop on our sex trafficking awareness tour for two years.

We are appalled over the recent partnership, which was announced quietly just hours before the commencement of the Thanksgiving holiday. We would have preferred if the agreement did not include such radical compromises as giving strip clubs a free pass on the nuisance abatement and decency ordinances that were put in place by Houstonians for good reason.

Although many cities vie for the number one spot, Houston’s reputation as a sex trafficking haven is well known in the media and among consumers – and your recent decision only reinforces that perception.

The faith community wants Houston to prosper, but not as a destination city for sex trafficking.

Please reconsider the partnership that was just forged and continue to uphold the laws and ordinances that were passed through due process by the citizens of Houston.

Sincerely,

Citizen of Houston

1. (maps of trafficking hotspots) <https://na4.salesforce.com/sfc/p/300000006E4S/a/600000004Seq/WHH3K0sZr5LI3DQETcWKj3IsDalDSboTOArplg5TS50=http://www.justice.gov/usao/mow/news2012/stokes.ple.html>
2. (Ohio’s correlation between pimp-controlled prostitution and strip clubs) <http://www.theguardianonline.com/news/2012/10/04/sex-for-sale-sex-trafficking-in-ohio/>
3. (Maksimenko case, Detroit) <http://www.humantrafficking.org/updates/682>
4. (Gonikman – Maksimenko) <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2012/May/12-crt-670.html>
5. (Strip club ignores signs of sex slavery) <http://www.courthousenews.com/2013/09/25/61457.htm>
6. (underage victims in Milwaukee strip clubs) http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci_24575557/wisconsin-man-son-charged-strip-club-sex-trafficking