



## NATIONAL CENTER ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

November 14, 2024

The Honorable Richard Durbin, Chairman  
The Honorable Lindsay Graham, Ranking Member  
Honorable Members, Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

### **Re: Urgent Request to Withhold Confirmation Proceedings for Representative Matt Gaetz's Nomination as Attorney General**

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, we extend our deep gratitude to each of you for your steadfast commitment to protecting human dignity and advancing justice. Your work in passing bipartisan legislation to combat sex trafficking and child sexual abuse has been essential in safeguarding the most vulnerable among us, and we are grateful for the unity and resolve you have shown in this mission. We write now asking that you continue this dedication to human dignity by withholding confirmation proceedings for former Representative Matt Gaetz's nomination as Attorney General until there is no doubt remaining about whether he engaged in sexual misconduct, including engaging in prostitution and sex trafficking of a minor.

As the nation's highest law enforcement officer, he would be responsible for enforcing our nation's laws prohibiting sex trafficking, child sexual abuse material, prostitution, obscenity, and many others. Unfortunately, much concern exists regarding his suitability for the position—a position requiring an impeccable personal record and the highest ethical standards—given the aforementioned allegations of criminal sexual misconduct. The victims and survivors we serve deserve no less than a complete resolution of the allegations of his engaging in sex buying, possibly of a minor. The people of this country deserve assurance that their leaders are committed to executing justice and upholding our nation's laws without exception.

Mr. Gaetz's resignation from Congress, just two days before the House Ethics Committee was set to vote on releasing its report about its investigation into his conduct, raises significant concerns about transparency and accountability. We respectfully urge the Committee to insist on immediate release of Ethics Committee findings. The investigation is critical in assessing Mr. Gaetz's fitness for the role of Attorney General. If the House will not release the report, we call on the Senate to conduct an investigation into these allegations before moving forward. Mr. Gaetz's candidacy cannot be fully vetted absent a full and transparent investigation. All reservations must be resolved before your committee moves forward.

It is also essential to understand the troubling intersection between prostitution, sex trafficking, and so-called "sugar dating." While many attempt to disguise financial exchanges for sex as "gifts"

or tuition payments to “girlfriends,” the harsh reality is that these are payments serving as a veil for sexual exploitation. So-called “sugar dating” is frequently a front for prostitution and, in many cases, crosses the line into sex trafficking. The majority of individuals involved in such arrangements are vulnerable young women—often marginalized and struggling to make ends meet. When powerful men offer financial support, the power imbalance becomes starkly evident.

As an elected member of Congress, Mr. Gaetz admitted to attending “sex” parties. These parties reportedly included young women, some allegedly minors, who were paid to participate in sex acts. It is further alleged that Mr. Gaetz did not merely attend these events but actively participated. Evidence suggests he sent payments through Venmo and Cash App to an associate, who then transferred funds to the women, labeling payments as “tuition.” Some on Mr. Gaetz’s team argued that the prostitution fell outside U.S. jurisdiction because it took place on yachts in international waters, an excuse that does not stand up to moral, and perhaps, legal scrutiny.

We are confident in your dedication to justice and urge you to act in the best interests of the American people by ensuring that Mr. Gaetz’s nomination is considered only after a full and transparent investigation. The US Attorney General must be someone with an unassailable commitment to justice and human dignity. Thank you once again for your tireless efforts to uphold human dignity, and for your bipartisan commitment to ending sexual exploitation in all its forms. We trust that you will continue to stand united in this vital cause.

Sincerely,



Marcel van der Watt, Ph.D.  
President



Dawn Hawkins  
CEO



Benjamin W. Bull  
General Counsel