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What Are the Costs When Teens Are Prostituted?

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It costs \$26,000-\$30,000 to incarcerate a woman for one year. It costs society an additional \$20,000 per year to provide for a child whose mother is incarcerated. In contrast, it costs \$14,000-\$17,000 to rehabilitate a woman for one year.

Genesis House, a residential program for prostituted women in Chicago

Who are the Beneficiaries of Prostituted Children?

Commercial sexual exploitation of children is a thriving business, both in the United States and in Michigan, and a lucrative endeavor for certain individuals. The fact that prostitution of children is illegal "does not negate the laws of supply and demand" (Greenfield, 1993). Young girls and boys on the street enter into prostitution as a means of survival, selling sexual favors for food, clothing, shelter, or drugs—or turning their proceeds over to a pimp.

How do I know these kids are worth money? 'Cause I been living off them for years, that's how. All kinds of people will buy them. You wouldn't believe it. What do I care if they want to throw away a couple of hundreds of dollars to screw some stupid 13-year-old? I could care less, so long as they give me their money.

Phil, a 46-year-old pimp (Campagna, 1988)

Successful pimps capitalize on the demand for vulnerable young girls and boys; as a result, they may earn large sums of money. A mid-1980s study of one pimp who managed 26 prostitutes revealed that he earned \$200,000 during one seven-month period—or approximately \$343,000 per year—none of which was reported to the Internal Revenue Service (Reynolds, 1986). In 2001 dollars, this pimp's income would be \$536,795.³ Pimps are the true beneficiaries of prostituted youth.

³The 2001 dollar figure was calculated by taking the average of two conversion rates. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis sets its implicit price deflator from 1985 to 2001 at 48% (available at <http://www.bea.doc.gov>); the Bureau of Labor

What Are the Costs to Prostituted Youth?

In prostitution, no woman [or girl or boy] stays whole. It is impossible to use a human body in the way women's bodies are used in prostitution and to have a whole human being at the end of it, or in the middle of it, or close to the beginning of it. It's impossible.

A prostituted woman (cited in Dworkin, 1997)

Prostituted women and youth are victims of frequent violent crimes, which generally are not reported to authorities (Monto & Hotaling, 2001). Teens are at extraordinary risk of a variety of physical and emotional consequences associated with prostitution. These consequences include:

- **Assault:** A study of prostituted women and girls in Oregon found that 84% reported suffering physical or aggravated assaults (cited in Raymond, 1998). In San Francisco, 82% reported being physically assaulted (Farley & Barkan, 1998).
- **Broken bones:** A study of prostituted women in Minneapolis/St. Paul found that half of those interviewed had been physically assaulted by "johns" (customers); 23% of those reported that they had had broken bones as a result of the assaults (Raymond, 1998).
- **Other physical injuries:** Of the prostituted women in the Minnesota study, 90% reported having experienced violence in their "personal relationships" that caused one or more of the following (Raymond, 1998):
 - Miscarriage
 - Stabbing
 - Loss of consciousness
 - Head injuries
- **Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs):** Prostituted women and girls are exposed to STDs with alarming frequency; in the study of prostituted women in Minnesota, 85% had contracted chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea, or herpes at least once. Children are at even higher risk than adults for contracting STDs (Saikaew, 1996).
- **Rape:** Prostituted women and girls report being raped as often as once a week (DePasquale, 1997). The Council for Prostitution (1998) conducted a study of prostituted women and girls in Portland, Oregon and found that 78% of those surveyed reported being raped an average of 49 times per year. A study of prostituted women and girls in San Francisco found that 68% had been raped; 48% of those said they had been raped more than 5 times (Farley & Barkan, 1998).
- **Sexual abuse/torture/mutilation:** The Council for Prostitution Alternatives found that 53% of prostituted women and girls were victims of sexual abuse and torture, and 27% had been mutilated (cited in Raymond, 1997).
- **Suicide attempts:** A study in Minnesota revealed that 46% of prostituted women had attempted suicide; 19% had tried to harm themselves in other ways (Raymond, 1998). In San Francisco, 5% reported that they were "currently suicidal" (Farley & Barkan, 1998).

- **Mortality:** In Canada, women and girls in prostitution are reported to have a mortality rate 40 times higher than the national average (Canadian Report on Prostitution and Pornography, cited in DePasquale, 1997).
- **Drug and alcohol abuse:** In San Francisco, prostituted women reported drug abuse problems at a rate of 75%, and 27% reported an alcohol abuse problem (Farley & Barkan, 1998).
- **Acute emotional problems:** In San Francisco, 17% of prostituted women interviewed wanted immediate hospital admission for an acute emotional problem or drug addiction, or both. One commonly reported form of emotional problem is Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).⁴
 - One study of PTSD among prostituted women found that 68% met the criteria for the PTSD diagnosis, while 76% met the criteria for partial PTSD (Farley & Barkan, 1998).
 - The average PTSD score of interviewees was comparable to the mean scores of Vietnam and Persian Gulf war veterans seeking treatment for PTSD (Farley & Barkan, 1998).
 - A study of PTSD among prostituted women in five countries revealed that while there was more physical violence to prostituted women in the street as opposed to prostituted women in brothels, there was no difference in the incidence of PTSD (Farley, Baral, Kiremire, & Sezgin, 1998).

These facts make painfully clear the exceptionally high price paid by women and girls who engage in prostitution.

What Are the Costs to Society?

Prostitution also exacts a high toll on society. Cities, counties, and taxpayers all bear the brunt of the costs for police and judicial personnel and correctional programs necessary to prosecute crimes and punish offenders who engage in prostitution. For example, in any given year, the San Francisco police make an average of 4,000 prostitution-related arrests. The San Francisco District Attorney's Office estimates the annual cost for prosecuting prostitution is approximately \$4.1 million, without including the high costs of incarceration and probation (Innovations in American Government Program, 2002).

Police costs accumulate because of the amount of time required for processing each arrest, including obtaining a solicitation; making an arrest of the prostituted teen, john, pimp, or promoter; transporting the person(s) to the station; completing the arrest; and testifying at trial. The majority of the police costs come from the officer testifying in court (Pearl, 1987).

Time is also the key component of the judicial costs. Reasons such as no legal counsel, or stall tactics, lead to more than one court appearance. The prosecution of an average prostitute, john, or pimp requires nearly four hours of a court's full attention over a period of weeks or months (Pearl, 1987).

Only about 11% of convicted prostitutes in America are sentenced to jail terms. However, because the sentences for prostitution are longer than most other misdemeanors, convicted prostitutes make up as much as 50% of women's jails in large cities (Pearl, 1987).

⁴ Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that can result when people have experienced "extreme traumatic stressors involving direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury; or other threat to one's personal integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate" (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

As Table 1 shows, the mean for 16 major cities in America to control prostitution each year is estimated to be nearly \$12 million; for “Big Six” cities (including Detroit, Michigan), the average annual cost of controlling prostitution is estimated to be more than \$18 million.

Comparing these costs with estimated costs for prostitution prevention and protection programs (see “San Francisco’s Successful Strategies” and “A Model Program from the State of Minnesota” in this report), it is clear why states—including Michigan—should be interested in funding programs designed to reduce prostitution.

**TABLE 1
AVERAGE ESTIMATED COSTS FOR CITIES TO CONTROL PROSTITUTION (2001)***

	<i>Detroit</i>	<i>“Second Cities”**</i>	<i>“Big Six” Cities***</i>	<i>Average: 16 Cities</i>
Police	\$ 8,674,094	\$ 3,758,742	\$ 7,600,205	\$ 5,199,290
Judicial	\$ 3,387,912	\$ 2,286,179	\$ 5,482,541	\$ 3,484,815
Correctional	\$ 4,199,487	\$ 1,659,410	\$ 5,519,483	\$ 3,107,523
Total	\$16,261,492	\$ 7,705,270	\$ 18,602,229	\$11,791,629

Source: Pearl (1987).

*2001 dollars represent a conversion from numbers derived from a 1985 study of the costs of prostitution on major American cities (Pearl, 1987). Dollar figures for 2001 represent the average of two conversion rates, one more conservative and the other more liberal: the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis sets its implicit price deflator, from 1985 to 2001, at 48%, available at <http://stats.beau.doc.gov>; the Bureau of Labor Statistics sets its consumer price index of inflation from 1985 to 2001 at 65% (available at <http://www.bls.gov>).

**“Second” Cities (population 500,000 – 1,000): Dallas, San Diego, Phoenix, Baltimore, San Francisco, Memphis, Washington D.C., Cleveland, Boston, New Orleans

***“Big Six” Cities (population over 1,000,000): New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Detroit