

Craigslist urged to drop adult services worldwide

September 8 2010, By EVERTON BAILEY Jr. , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and national nonprofit organizations said Tuesday they want Craigslist to be "a model for good policy" and officially get rid of its adult services section globally.

Blumenthal said he sent a letter to the classified advertising website seeking confirmation that it no longer carries adult services [ads on its U.S. websites](#) and urged [Craigslist](#) to improve its policing methods to block ads that promote prostitution and child trafficking.

"Our message to Craigslist is to put people above profit," Blumenthal said at a press conference. "Sacrifice the money if necessary. Clearly make a public promise that you are shutting down adult services and set a model for the industry in using screening and filtering technology."

Two weeks after 17 state attorneys general sent a joint letter to Craigslist demanding it remove its adult services section over concerns that the company could not completely block illegal ads, Craigslist replaced the section link with a black-and-white "censored" bar Saturday.

Separately Tuesday, four Washington D.C.-based anti-child trafficking organizations released a statement asking Craigslist to close their adult services section on their websites outside of the U.S. as well.

"While this is a good first step in the U.S., there are still more than 250 other Craigslist 'erotic' pages around the world where children and young

women are still being sold for sex through Craigslist," the statement said.

The nonprofit groups, the Polaris Project, the Rebecca Project for Human Rights, FAIR Fund and Courtney's House, also said the website has become a major player in the child and women trafficking market.

Craigslist has yet to explain the censored label or publicly respond to the request of the organizations. Company officials have not returned phone and e-mail messages from The Associated Press.

The website has come under increased scrutiny since the jailhouse suicide last month of 24-year-old Philip Markoff, a former Boston University student. Markoff was awaiting trial for the fatal shooting of Julissa Brisman of New York City and the armed robbery of a Las Vegas woman. Rhode Island prosecutors also accused him of attacking a stripper. Markoff had met the women through ads for erotic services posted on Craigslist.

Blumenthal said he talked to Craigslist attorneys over the weekend but received no indication of what the website's long-term plans are for its adult services section. Meanwhile, he said, he has found evidence that potentially illegal ads may have migrated to other sections of the website.

"Simply removing one portion of your site where you permitted and profited from prostitution ads is insufficient if ads go elsewhere," Blumenthal, who is running for a U.S. Senate seat, said in his letter to the company.

Blumenthal said he and 20 other state attorneys general are looking into whether any legal action can be taken against the website to permanently shut down the [adult services](#) section.

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