New “John” Law Takes Effect Today

Beginning October 1st, St. Petersburg Police Officers will be using a new law in their effort to curb prostitution in the City. The new Florida law provides stronger punishments for those individuals, commonly known as “Johns”, who solicit a person to commit prostitution.

1. The judge is required to assess the offender a civil penalty of $5,000 when convicted or when he enters a guilty plea.

2. Under the new law, “Johns” will be guilty of a 1st degree misdemeanor upon their first conviction. Their second violation will be treated as a 3rd degree felony and their third violation a 2nd degree felony. (up until now it has been a 2nd degree misdemeanor)

3. In addition to the normal penalties imposed, once the person is convicted, the judge is required to order the offender to perform 100 hours of community service and to pay to attend an educational program about the harmful effects of prostitution and human trafficking.

4. Upon the offender’s second conviction or any subsequent convictions thereafter, the judge is required to sentence the offender to a minimum mandatory of 10 days in the county jail.

5. If a vehicle is used in the course of the violation and the offender is convicted of the crime, the judge is allowed to issue an order impounding or immobilizing of the vehicle for up to 60 days.

As St. Petersburg Police Officers continue to address the problem of prostitution it is believed the new law will have a deterrent effect on many of those who seek out prostitutes and in doing so unwittingly encourage drug addiction, human trafficking and related crimes which affect the quality of life of our citizens and the prosperity of our businesses community.