

SEX TRAFFICKING IN NORTH CAROLINA

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INTRODUCTION

“Whether they are trapped in forced sexual or labor exploitation, human trafficking victims cannot walk away, but are held in service through force, threats, and fear. All too often suffering from horrible physical and sexual abuse, it is hard for them to imagine that there might be a place of refuge.” United States President Barak Obama recognized the substance of the issue of human trafficking, reflected in this excerpt from his 2010 Presidential Proclamation, when he made January National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Experts show, and federal documentation confirms, that the trafficking of human beings exists in many forms that include acts of force, coercion, and fraud, all involved in the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person. There is no region in the world untouched by human trafficking activity, making it a global issue about which we must all be aware.

The most common form of human trafficking is sex trafficking, understood as the trafficking of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act. Sex trafficking is a transnational industry driven by a constant and voluminous demand from those who purchase sex acts, the organizers who run the industry and traffic victims, state policy that tolerates the industry to exist, and a culture that normalizes sex acts through the mass media.¹ Women and children continue to be sex trafficked due to the challenges in identifying victims and a lack political will to eliminate all forms of sex trafficking. In this report, we will take a condensed look at the issue of sex trafficking, with particular focus on activity in the U.S. state of North Carolina, that reflects a growing awareness of the issue. Also, in order to explore best practice ideas for combating sex trafficking, we will survey the nonprofit coalition NC Stop Human Trafficking as a means to bring their strategies to the attention of a global audience. This exchange of strategies is meant to fuel the efforts in combating the issue.

SEX TRAFFICKING – A GLOBAL ISSUE

As a global issue, human trafficking is estimated to be a \$32 billion yearly industry, where 27 million people are enslaved and trafficked into various forms of sexual and labor exploitation.² Among the projected 27 million people who are currently victims of human trafficking, often referred to as modern-day slaves, half

¹ Hughes, Donna “The Demand For Victims of Sex Trafficking” p. 7

² US Dept of Health and Human Services Rescue and Restore Campaign www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking

are children and 80% are women.³ While many victims are trafficked to perform tasks of domestic and agricultural labor, a form of human trafficking referred to as labor trafficking, the majority of trafficking victims are part of the sex trade, which will be our focus in this report. Victims of human trafficking who are forced to work in the sex industry are victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

Commercial sexual exploitation, often referred to as CSE, is understood to be the entire, or at least primary, sexual exploitation of victims for financial or other economic benefit. In cases of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE), the trafficker(s) or exploiter(s) take maximum benefits, while victim's rights and autonomy are revoked. CSE takes place within the sex trafficking industry through these primary forms: prostitution, pornography, live sex shows, sex tourism, and, in some cases, child marriages. These sex trafficking industries can be interrelated so that victims may end up working in more than one realm of the industry. CSE may also occur in human labor trafficking, during domestic servitude or bonded labor.⁴

Who the victims are of sex trafficking

There is a common trend that women and girls who are neglected, runaways, or sold by their families to traffickers make up the majority of victims. Traffickers target women who are vulnerable both socially and emotionally. Instead of approaching victims arbitrarily, that is to say randomly abducting women and girls of all social classes off the street, traffickers target their victims who live neglected or alone. There is high recruitment in poverty-stricken areas, as women in this population are likely to have minimal options, and therefore easier to lure into traffickers' false promises of support, glamour, and comfort. Children are especially vulnerable to traffickers, particularly missing or abandoned children, as the separation of a victim at a young age from her family enhances a trafficker's control over her.

While targeting women on the streets is a common practice among traffickers, they may also target women and girls who have homes and families. In these cases, traffickers lure family members with false offers, appealing particularly to families with little or no means to provide for their daughters. In these cases, family members might be looking to improve their family's economic situation by handing over their daughter. They might also believe that their daughter will be better off in the hands of the trafficker, who will use fraud to induce the family and daughter into a trafficking situation.⁵ This category of women who have homes and families may also include runaways.

How a trafficker gains control

³ taken from Abolition brochure

⁴ ECPAT information booklet, page 4

⁵ NC Human Trafficking Task Force Manual on Sex Trafficking in NC - RIPPLE

Once under the control of a trafficker, victims become enslaved in their situation through force, fraud and coercion.⁶ Expressions of force occur through rape, beatings, and solitary confinements to initiate control over victims. Force in the form of violent beatings is especially prevalent during the early stages of sex trafficking, in order to 'break' a victim, often referred to as the 'seasoning process.' Traffickers use this process as a means to prevent a victim's resistance in order to implement their control.

Fraud is used as a means to lure victims into a trafficking situation. For example, a trafficker may present an appealing modeling opportunity to a girl with little material wealth and little options. Once the girl, who has perhaps never had someone give her positive attention, trusts the offer, the trafficker uses the girl for other purposes, such as prostitution. Once she is trafficked and arrives at her new destination, the girl never enters into the fashionable and glamorous world of modeling that she has seen on television and dreamed about, but is instead used as a sex slave. Fraud occurs in many forms and includes any lie used on a victim or her family to get her under a trafficker's control

Coercion is used to cause a victim to believe that their failure to submit to a trafficker's demand will result in their own physical harm or legal ramifications, which would jeopardize their freedom, such as being jailed or deported. Traffickers use coercion by spilling falsities to victims, threatening their physical safety by threatening to beat or even kill them. Traffickers also threaten their victims' legal safety through lies and schemes that are untrue. A trafficker may tell their victim that if she discloses any information to an authority, she will go to jail or worse. Trafficker's coercion may be augmented when they have possession over the woman's legal documents, as she will feel powerless without identification documents

The effects of sex trafficking on victims

The effects of sex trafficking on its victims range from the physical to the psychological. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, physical symptoms include: "sleeping and eating disorders, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, pelvic pain, rectal trauma and urinary difficulties from working in the sex industry," while mental symptoms include: "fear and anxiety, depression or mood changes, guilt and shame, cultural shock from finding themselves in a strange country, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, and traumatic bonding with the trafficker."⁷ Due to the hardships of their environment, victims of sex trafficking usually experience a multitude of these symptoms. While physical symptoms, if not lethal, can be healed with proper medical care, mental symptoms run deep and can take a lifetime to address and cure. Once recovered, victims require aid from professional medical and psychological services in order to successfully recover.

⁶ according to Department of Health & Human Services "Human Trafficking Fact Sheet"

⁷ U.S. Dept HHS "Human Trafficking Fact Sheet"

SEX TRAFFICKING IN THE U.S.

The United States plays a significant role in sex trafficking as a primary destination country for trafficked victims. Along with other wealthy nations, it provides a voluminous number of patrons willing to pay for sex acts, largely fueling the sex industry. It is estimated that of the 700,000 to 4 million victims who are annually trafficked worldwide, between 14,500 and 17,500 of those victims are trafficked into the United States.⁸ These foreign victims likely do not speak English and are therefore extremely dependent on their traffickers, paralyzing them in their slavery.

In order to address the issue, the U.S. government has a number of departments tasked with investigating cases of sex trafficking. Primarily, it is the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) who collaborate to investigate human trafficking cases. In 2008, for example, ICE opened 432 human trafficking investigations, of which 262 were classified as commercial sexual exploitation.⁹ We can observe here that of the estimated 17,500 victims who are trafficked into the U.S. each year, federal enforcement is opening investigation on approximately 2% of all victims. While this percentage is minimal at best, ICE 's investigation of human trafficking is a recent development in the federal government, and the number of convictions has increased significantly.

State governments gained significant incentive to implement more comprehensive systems to combat sex trafficking when it became a more prominent political issue. The issue caught policymakers' attention in Washington when then-first lady Hilary Rodham Clinton sought to create a more holistic approach to combating sex and labor trafficking in the mid-1990s. From her work, along with Attorney General Janet Reno and Secretary of State Madeline Albright, came the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), enacted during the George W. Bush administration.¹⁰ Aimed to invigorate state's roles in forming policies and procedures to combat human trafficking, TVPA defines sex trafficking as, "the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person forced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years." Here we must note that, according to the definition, girls under the age of 18 years do not need to be physically moved in order to be sex trafficked; any form of sexual slavery of a minor defines the act as sex trafficking. We may also note that an act of 'force, fraud, or coercion' does not need to be a continued offense, meaning that a woman need only to experience such an act one time in order to be considered a victim.

⁸ UNOCD Trafficking in Humans Report and U.S. Dept HHA Human Trafficking Fact Sheet

⁹ ICE Fiscal Year 2008 Annual Report

¹⁰ <http://geneva.usmission.gov/2010/05/06/trafficking-victims-protection-act/>

While TVPA creates significant initiative for states to combat the offenders and industries that fuel sex trafficking, it is exclusively applied to victims trafficked across international borders into the country. This includes women and girls who are brought into the U.S., either legally or illegally, but does not include victims of internal trafficking. Internally trafficked victims include U.S. citizens who either leave or are kicked out of their homes, and subsequently subjected to commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) in the sex trade. TVPA leaves U.S. citizens without the same attention as victims who are harbored from other countries. Prostitution is a common form of CSE and is, in most U.S. states, illegal. As a result, In the case of a U.S. resident who is trafficked in the sex trade, they are subject to state and federal laws that put them either in juvenile detention centers for minors, or in prisons. These laws allow that victims of prostitution are subject to criminal treatment. There is much current debate regarding this treatment, as it provides no means of recovery and rehabilitation for the women and girls trafficked into the sex trade. Federal laws reflect the idea that prostitution is voluntary, an assumption many argue to be unfair when those convicted of prostitution are in reality victims of sex trafficking. While TVPA currently works to protect foreign victims of sex trafficking, it leaves the issue of domestically trafficked victims untouched.

According to the U.S. Department of State, the main goals of TVPA are to prevent human trafficking overseas, protect victims and help them rebuild their lives in the U.S. with Federal and state support, and to prosecute traffickers of persons under stiff federal penalties. The prevention aspect of this act authorizes public education of the issue in order to create awareness and advocacy. The law also establishes the T-visa in order to protect victims once they are identified. The T-visa allows victims of sex trafficking to become temporary citizens of the U.S., making them eligible for the Witness Protection Program, as well as eventual permanent residency. The prosecution aspect of TVPA creates new tools meant to strengthen law enforcement's ability to punish traffickers by making human trafficking a federal crime with severe penalties.

SEX TRAFFICKING IN NORTH CAROLINA

Since the inaction of the Trafficking Victims' Protection Act (TVPA), the U.S. has seen a significant response at the state level to creating awareness and prevention programs to combat sex trafficking. We will now focus on the state of North Carolina's role in the human sex trade, and its strategies of protecting victims and prosecuting offenders.

One of the most recent developments in North Carolina's response to attacking the issue occurred when NC Governor Beverly Purdue issued a proclamation in 2011, establishing January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Approximately one year after President Barack Obama declared the month as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, Governor Purdue's proclamation reflects the significance of the issue in North Carolina, which has been

ranked the 8th most likely state where human trafficking occurs.¹¹ Especially appealing to human traffickers, are the major highways I85 and I95 in North Carolina, which traffickers use as veins when harboring and transporting victims. Traffickers in North Carolina also rely heavily on the Internet to solicit commercial sex and garner business from those who pay for trafficked women, who are often referred to as 'Johns'. Unregulated use of the Internet allows Johns to use it as a means to access sex, and has expanded commercial sex acts to include live sex shows. Traffickers benefit greatly from the Internet as it makes their ability to supply women and girls a speedy, simple, and anonymous process.

Governor Purdue's proclamation is a huge step in creating public awareness of the issue. Because most North Carolinians aren't aware of their state's human trafficking activity, it is essential to educate the public on how sex trafficking exists as a form of modern-day slavery, and what can be done to identify and assist its victims. There is great difficulty in identify victims of sex trafficking, because they are under round-the-clock supervision, escorted by traffickers at all times, making it impossible for them to contact the authorities. Traffickers will also prevent their victims from seeking out the authorities by lying about harsh physical or legal punishments that will ensue if they are discovered. Victims may find themselves in vice units of municipal or local police departments being charged with prostitution, but are not aided because there is no law in North Carolina mandating that they are to be treated as victims instead of criminals.

In response to the hardships that victims experience, there are a number of organizations working in North Carolina to combat sex trafficking. These organizations include law enforcement, legal advocates, social service providers, healthcare providers, and non-profit organizations. While each of these entities have the ability to provide invaluable effort to identify and aid the victims of modern-day slavery, results will be most effective when these organizations are connected in order to coordinate their work. We will now focus on one North Carolina organization who functions as a coalition against human trafficking in order to survey their strategies as a means to inform others of their activity.

NC STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING

NC Stop Human Trafficking is a statewide nonprofit organization that functions as a coalition to combat human trafficking in North Carolina. Its goal is to function as the intermediary for concerned citizens, nonprofit faith-based and community-based organizations, and governmental and non-governmental organizations. NC Stop has active member groups in ten different cities in North Carolina¹², allowing it to connect the regions throughout the state. Charity Magnuson, Director of NC Stop, defines the primary mission of the organization to be spreading information about the issue all across North Carolina. In order to work

¹¹ taken from report published by WBTV at <http://www.wbvtv.com/global/story.asp?s=11828239>

¹² Wilmington, Greenville, Fayetteville, Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, Burlington, Greensboro, Charlotte, and Asheville

towards this goal, NC Stop Human Trafficking uses Internet resources to connect concerned community members with organizations to coordinate statewide efforts to combat human trafficking. Most recently, the organization hosted a week of human trafficking awareness events in January 2011, during North Carolina's first recognition of Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

The P.A.V.E. Model

The statewide organization outlines its mission through a model represented by the acronym P.A.V.E. – Prevention, Advocacy, Victim Awareness, and Education. To address each focus, NC Stop Human Trafficking works with already existing organizations in order to create efficiency through collaboration. In this regard, director Magnuson emphasizes the inutility of 'reinventing the wheel' when there are already people and organizations who have covered significant ground in creating strategies to combat human trafficking. The P.A.V.E. model is designed to address the four areas signified above. The organization cites specific actions to be completed for each of the four categories. In order to survey NC Stop Human Trafficking's action plan, we will now review their strategies.

Prevention

NC Stop's prevention strategy recommends that education is essential to protecting potential victims from falling into the human trafficking network. More specifically, they suggest educating the at-risk population so that they know how to spot exploitation, and who to turn to for help. In order to achieve this, the organization recommends addressing social work services, which are in contact with the at-risk population. The idea here is that once social workers are knowledgeable about the issue, they can in turn educate the at-risk population. NC Stop also stresses importance on working towards the exposure and reduction of violence, exploitation, devaluation, and degradation, including educating youth about how to build healthy relationships that are violence and coercion free. By creating a knowledgeable youth, capable of identifying exploitation, traffickers will have less success when trying to lure victims into their control.

Advocacy

NC Stop's focus on advocacy recommends changes in North Carolina state law. These include harsher punishments for 'Johns' and traffickers, significant changes in state prostitution laws, including a redefinition of the term, and support for legislative funding for programs that would provide shelter, education, food, and therapy for victims. North Carolina prostitution laws were written in 1919 and allow that any "promiscuous woman" can be arrested for prostitution. Instead, NC Stop recommends adding language that would link anti-trafficking laws to prostitution laws, so that minors can no longer be charged with prostitution. Under federal anti-trafficking laws, anyone under the age of 18 engaged in a commercial sex act is considered a victim. NC Stop seeks a change in the definition of

prostitution to add a provision with the same care to minors. They also recommend a codification of victim services in both anti-trafficking and prostitution laws, meaning the law would state that victims are entitled to receive victim services. They also request the inclusion of a definition victim services to insure that victims receive proper support as they recover. NC Stop holds that once codified, victim services will have a direct outlet to receiving federal funds.

Victim Services

Recommended victim services include shelter as a means of security, health care, food, clothing, personal hygiene, therapy, life coaching, legal services including immigration processing if applicable, and alternative life choices including training and support. The organization also places emphasis on long-term victim services, meaning a support system that would allow victims to reintegrate back into society in a safe and healthy way with an effective follow up. All of the above-mentioned services are essential to a victim's full recovery. They include both physical and mental rehabilitation resources and stress the importance of long-term support.

Education

When NC Stop refers to education as the fourth part of the P.A.V.E. model, the organization recommends a number of target groups to educate about the issue. The focus on education is closely connected with the recommended advocacy strategies mentioned above. They target the education of civic organizations and associations with a service mission, nongovernmental and non-profit organizations with a service mission, and faith based organizations and churches. All of these groups with service missions could integrate human trafficking into their causes. In addition, NC Stop calls to educate schools, law enforcement, media, people with celebrity, legislators, and the general public. Particular stress is placed on those who are in contact with at risk youth, which would include social workers, school guidance counselors, school nurses, school mentorship programs such as Boys and Girls Club, reproductive health care providers such as Planned Parenthood, foster parents, adoption and foster care networks, malls, movie theaters, and the social media.

It appears that NC Stop Human Trafficking maintains a pretty exhaustive list when recommending who should become educated on the issue of human trafficking. This is reflective of the breadth of the issue. Because community members can fall victim to trafficking through a multitude of outlets and for a multitude of reasons, NC Stop Human Trafficking focuses on a holistic community understanding of human trafficking.

Conclusion

A mass statewide education of human sex trafficking will increase the importance of the issue in North Carolina legislation. NC Stop Human Trafficking believes that once the population in North Carolina can prove to legislators that

human trafficking is an important issue, there will be enough power to introduce and pass laws that will allow for its elimination. NC Stop focuses on connecting organizations and individuals across the state in order to form a coalition with the task of speaking out about stop human trafficking.

This strategy can be employed across the United States, and then across the world. If every organization concerned with human trafficking collaborated their efforts, we would have a nationwide network of resources. This network would have the power to educate the nation on the issue, creating enough strength to change our state laws so that prostitution is linked to human trafficking, offenders are more harshly punished, and victim services are guaranteed by law. These legislative changes would protect the thousands of women enslaved in the industry. As one of the largest sources of demand for commercial sex, the United States has the obligation and the power to set the precedent for collaborating its resources to end the sex trade. It is necessary to compare and contrast each state's best and worst practices. This information can in turn be shared with the global population in order to attack and reduce the \$32 billion industry that is the trafficking of human beings.

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