

Stop Trafficking !

Anti Human Trafficking Newsletter



Awareness

Advocacy

Action

August 2017 Vol. 15 No. 08

This issue highlights the trafficking of homeless youth.

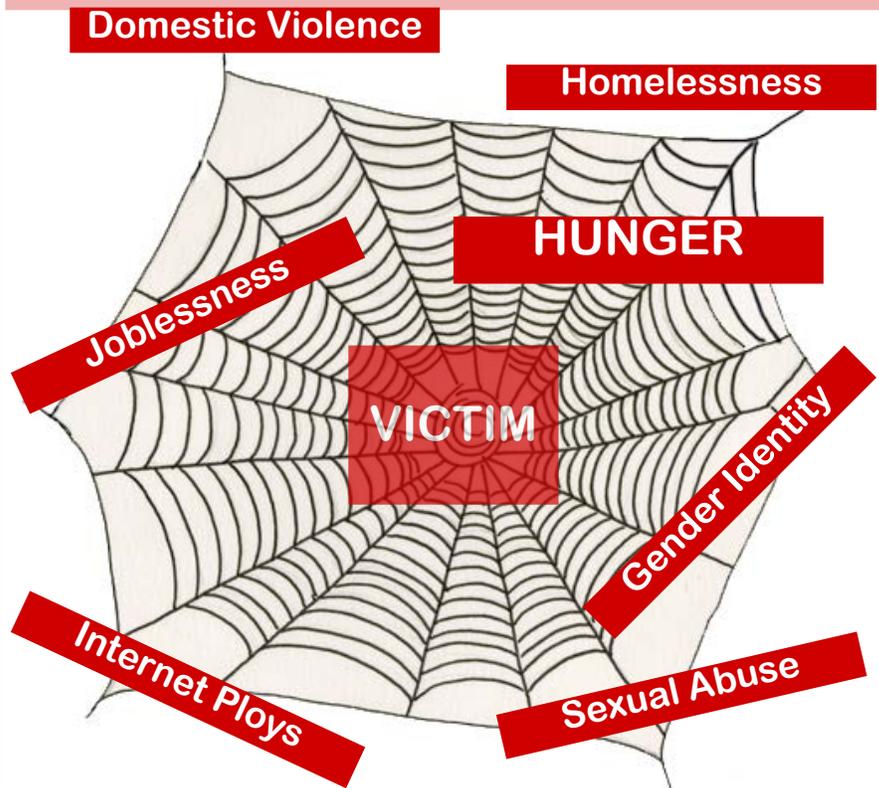


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The WEB That Is Human Trafficking



The spider web image is a useful symbol for what is happening within the realm of human trafficking — many socio-economic factors converging as lures used by traffickers and as danger points to the vulnerable — resulting in entrapment, coercion, and modern day slavery.

The process a spider uses to form a web has parallels with the methods used by traffickers to lure their victims.

“An orb web consists of a durable silk frame made up of the outer bridge lines with internal anchor lines that are pulled downward to create spokes. An elastic capture thread is then used to make the spiral lines that connect the spokes together, giving the web the ability to absorb an oncoming prey. The spirals are bounded by sticky droplets to secure these victims. Crafting such a web is a highly cognitive endeavor, requiring a spider to size up a space, pick out anchor points and assess how much silk it has available. Orb weavers often redo their webs daily and have a memory for spaces they have used before. Orb webs can be viewed as highly functional predatory devices and when the weather cooperates, a spider can capture as many as 250 insects in a single day.”

(<https://baynature.org/article/spiders/>)



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Homeless Youth in the United States

'Carla'

"When I don't want to do the (sexual) things they want, they pull my hair, they slap my face, they threaten me with a gun," explained 'Carla'. She had been living with a friend's family when the mother invited her to go out of town for the weekend. Once they arrived at their hotel, men began showing up and she was forced to have sex with them. She later found out that her friend's mother had advertised her for sex on Backpage.com.

(<http://impact.sp2.upenn.edu/fieldctr/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Field-Center-Trafficking-Research-Handout.pdf>)

Between February 2014 and June 2016 *Covenant House International* conducted the largest-ever study of the incidence of trafficking among homeless youth. The study encompassed approximately 1,000 youth across 13 cities. Youth were invited to participate, on a voluntary basis, in a point-in-time study about work experience. These youth had accessed services through Covenant House's network of shelters, transitional living and apartment programs, and drop-in centers.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using the *Human Trafficking Interview and Assessment Measure* (HTI-AM-14) to assess whether youth had been trafficked for sex or labor in their lifetimes. Besides analyzing the prevalence of child trafficking, the study examined the history of child maltreatment, out of home placement, and resilience factors among those who were sex trafficked or engaged in the sex trade to survive.

Researchers from the *Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research*, based in Philadelphia, surveyed 300 homeless youth in Philadelphia, PA; Phoenix, AZ; and Washington, D.C.

Researchers from Loyola Univ. New Orleans's *Modern Slavery Research Project* (MSRP) studied 641 homeless and run-away youth aged 17 to 25 at sites in Anchorage, AK; Atlanta, GA; Detroit, MI; Fort Lauderdale, FL; Los Angeles, CA; New Orleans, LA; Oakland, CA; St. Louis, MO; Toronto, Ontario; Vancouver, British Columbia. (<http://covenanthousestudy.org/>)

Survey Results from the Field Center

17% of interviewed youth were victims of sex trafficking;
 14% engaged in 'survival sex' (exchanging sex to meet a basic human need);
 24% of females and 9% of males reported being victims of sex trafficking;
 67% of homeless females report being offered money for sex;
 22% of homeless youth, who were offered money for sex, had this happen on their first night being homeless;
 39% of those who were sex trafficked identified themselves as LGBTQ;
 60% of transgender youth reported being trafficked for sex;
 95% of sex trafficked youth reported a history of child maltreatment, with 49% being sexually abused;
 58% of those without a caring adult in their lives were sex trafficked;
 67% of those who were sex trafficked had not graduated from high school.

Survey Results from the Modern Slavery Research Project

19% (124) of those interviewed were identified as victims of some form of human trafficking, following the legal definition of the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act* (TVPA).
 14% (92) of the total population had been trafficked for sex; 8% (52) had been trafficked for other forced labor; and 3% (22) were trafficked for both sex and labor.
 91% of the respondents reported being approached by someone who was offering an opportunity for income that was too good to be true. This included situations that turned into trafficking, as well as other offers for commercial sexual exchanges, fraudulent commission-based sales, credit card scams, stolen phone sales, and check fraud.

Sex Trafficking and Commercial Sex

14% (92) were victims of sex trafficking, applying the TVPA definition.



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MSRP Survey *cont. from pg. 2*

Of the 92 youth who were identified as sex trafficking victims within the study, nearly 58% (53) were in situations of force, fraud, or coercion characteristic of human trafficking under the TVPA.

42% of youth who were identified as sex trafficking victims were minors involved in the sale of commercial sex and survival sex but were not forced by a third party to do so.

20% (49) of cisgender women interviewed reported experiences consistent with the definition of sex trafficking, as did 11% (40) of cisgender men. (Cisgendered are those who identify with the biological sex of their birth.)

24% (30) of LGBTQ youth were trafficked for sex, compared to 12% of non-LGBTQ youth.

19% (121) of the youth interviewed turned to survival sex at some difficult point in their lives.

30% (193) of all youth interviewed had engaged in the sex trade at some point in their lifetimes (24% - 93 men; 38% - 93 women), whether through situations of force, survival sex, or commercial sexual work as adults. (7 transgender youth were engaged in the sex trade, but the sample size was not large enough to produce significant findings.)

- The median age of entry into trading sex was 18, while the median age for those who were considered trafficked was 16.

Labor Trafficking

8% of respondents were found to have been trafficked for labor.

Situations of forced labor included youth who were forced to work in factories, domestic labor situations, agriculture, international drug smuggling, sex-trade-related labor, and commission-based sales.

81% of labor trafficking cases reported were instances of forced drug dealing. Nearly 7% (42) of all youth interviewed had been forced into working in the drug trade.

Forced drug dealing occurred through familial and cultural coercion, as well as through the violence of suppliers and gangs.

Brandon

As a teenager, Brandon stood on the streets with his backpack, offering a box of candy for sale. He was not really selling candy. Inside his backpack was crack cocaine given him by a drug dealer. Once, he miscounted the money he owed the dealer. His punishment landed him in the hospital, where he had metal pins placed to repair his shoulder. The dealer also told Brandon he would die if he quit.

Brandon was finally able to leave when his foster care agency moved him to a new foster home hours away from that neighborhood.

Brandon's life in foster care began when he was four years old. His mother and siblings had been homeless and sleeping on park benches before he was removed for neglect. In that first placement at a children's shelter, Brandon was emotionally, verbally, and physically abused. He started selling drugs when he was seven. He thought that selling drugs would make him not feel like a victim anymore.

(pg. 42 NJ Study)

LaTasha and Natalie

LaTasha and Natalie were both in foster care and homeless before they heard about a 'rooming house' where they could stay.

Once they got there, they learned the rules of the house. Men would come, and the girls had to perform sex acts on them. Also, they had to try to sell drugs to them. The woman who ran the house paid the girls at the end of the month, but never as much as she told them they would get. She told them to lie about what they did. If anyone asked, *'they worked under the table at the corner store'*.

If they tried to leave, the woman would get men to beat them up, or she would do it herself. They knew this would happen because they saw it happen to other girls, but the woman threatened far worse than they could imagine. They both eventually escaped and came to Covenant House together. (pg. 33 NJ Study)

How Are Homeless Youth Affected?

Homeless youth are vulnerable to both sex and labor trafficking because they tend to experience a higher rate of the primary risk factors to trafficking: poverty, unemployment, a history of sexual abuse, and a history of mental health issues. If they have families who are involved in the commercial sex trade or gangs, their risk is even higher. Homeless youth indicated that they struggled to find paid work, affordable housing, and support systems that would help them access basic necessities. They experienced discrimination in their jobs and in housing. These factors made the youth interviewed more likely to turn to the sex trade for survival.

Economics:

For the vast majority of youth, economic factors made them most vulnerable to traffickers and unwanted engagement in the sex trade. They reported that they often found themselves desperate for work and that people took advantage of their needs. 91% of respondents reported being approached by strangers or acquaintances, who offered lucrative work opportunities that turned out to be fraudulent work

Factors *cont. pg. 4*



Awareness

Factors *cont. from pg. 3*

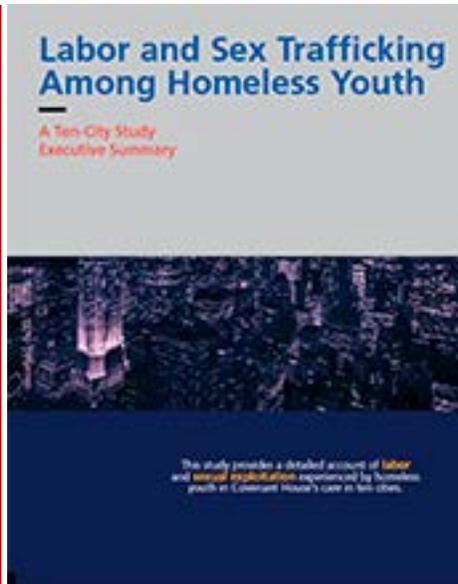
situations, scams, pandering, or sex trafficking. While some were resilient and walked away from these offers, many of the youth who were trafficked for sex and labor were recruited in this way. Others felt forced to turn to trading sex because they could not find legitimate work. 84% of youth who reported engaging in the sex trade without a third-party controller did so because of economic need.

Housing:

Youth reported that their fear of sleeping on the streets left them vulnerable to sex and labor traffickers and to survival sex. Securing housing was a primary concern for the vast majority of the youth interviewed. 68% of the youth who were trafficked or who engaged in survival sex or commercial sex had done so while homeless. 19% of all youth interviewed had engaged in survival sex solely so that they could access housing or food. This problem is even starker among those who are not sheltered. The incidence of trafficking among drop-in youth — sometimes called ‘street youth’ — was high relative to the sheltered cohort: 24% were trafficked for sex, 13% for labor. 41% of interviewed drop-in youth had engaged in the sex trade in some way at some point in their lives. 33% of them had engaged in survival sex as either adults or minors. Many of the trafficked youth who were accessing Covenant House’s shelter programs said they saw the shelters as safe havens from their traffickers.

Work:

The youth interviewed indicated that they encountered people who took advantage of them when they were



searching for work. A lack of job opportunities converged with a lack of computer literacy and job skills, leading to vulnerability. Many youth pursued job advertisements that turned out to be fraudulent. At Covenant House they sought training on how to identify a safe job and additional job skills training programs to help them avoid labor traffickers, sex traffickers, and other exploitative labor situations.

Gender:

20% of all cisgender women and 10% of all cisgender men had experienced a situation that was considered sex trafficking. While cisgender women were more likely to be trafficked and to engage in the sex trade, cisgender men were more likely to be trafficked than many people might expect. 11% of cisgender men had been trafficked, and a total of 24% of them had engaged in at least one commercial sexual exchange at some point in their lives. 10% of heterosexual men had been trafficked, while more than 21% LGBTQ men had

been trafficked. Despite this, cisgender male youth reported that they typically had not been asked about engaging in the sex trade when interacting with social service providers and were not typically offered services for trafficking or sexual exploitation.

Sexuality:

LGBTQ youth were disproportionately affected by sex trafficking and significantly more reported engaging in the sex trade. Though LGBTQ youth accounted for 19% of the respondents interviewed, they accounted for 36% of the sex trafficking victims and 36% of those who engaged in the sex trade. Half of the LGBTQ youth had engaged in the sex trade in some way during their lifetimes. LGBTQ youth were significantly more likely to be sex-trafficked than their straight counterparts.

Aging Out:

Aging out of the foster care system made youth vulnerable to traffickers and to engagement in the sex trade. The median age of entry into trading sex for the youth we interviewed was 18 years old, and for those who were sex trafficked it was 16. Youth reported becoming homeless as a result of leaving foster care, and they indicated that homelessness resulted in vulnerability to the sex trade and sex trafficking. Though they constituted 21% (137) of the sample, youth who had a history of involvement in the foster system accounted for 29% (25) of all sex trafficking victims, 27% (49) of all youth engaged in the sex trade, and 26% (13) of all youth who were labor trafficked.

Youth between the ages of 17 and 19 need special attention because of these unique vulnerabilities.

(<http://covenanthousestudy.org/>)



Awareness

Impossible Choices: Teens and Food Insecurity in America

The past couple of decades have been difficult for low-income families. Family poverty has increased, real wages have stagnated for low-income workers, and cash assistance has radically declined. The Great Recession only exacerbated this hardship, causing the number of food insecure households — those without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food — to spike and remain stubbornly high years into the recovery.

Within these distressed households live an estimated 6.8 million food-insecure young people ages 10 through 17, including 2.9 million with very low food security and another 4 million living in marginally food-secure households. We know very little about how these young people experience hunger at this pivotal time in their lives.



The report, *Impossible Choices*, presents findings from a study that sheds light on the unique ways that food insecurity affects teens. Though small and exploratory in scope, the stories from youth who participated in the 20 focus groups across the 10 communities were remarkably consistent. The findings from this research paint a disturbing picture of ways that food insecurity may affect American youth and threaten their wellbeing.

In diverse settings, we heard many of the same themes:

- Teen food insecurity is widespread.

- Teens fear stigma around hunger and actively hide it.
- Food-insecure teens strategize about how to mitigate their hunger and make food last longer for the whole family.
- Parents try to protect teens from hunger and from bearing responsibility for

- providing for themselves or others.
- Teens would overwhelmingly prefer to earn money through a formal job.
- When faced with acute food insecurity, teens in all but two of the communities said that youth engage in criminal behavior, ranging from shoplifting food directly to selling drugs and stealing items to resell for cash. These behaviors were most common among young men in communities with the most-limited employment options.

- Teens in all 10 communities and in 13 of the 20 focus groups talked about some youth 'selling their body' or engaging in 'sex for money' as a strategy to make ends meet. However, these themes came out most strongly in high-poverty communities where teens also described sexually coercive environments. Sexual exploitation most commonly took the form of transactional dating relationships with older adults.

- In a few communities, teens talked about going to jail or failing school as viable strategies for ensuring regular meals.

This exploratory research suggests that teen food insecurity is an issue that requires urgent action. The riskiest behaviors are by no means typical of all teens, even in the most distressed places; however, the report illustrates the lengths to which some of the most desperate and food-insecure youth are willing to go to survive when there are few options available to them. It is important to remember that, throughout this report, we are talking about adolescents (those ages 13 through 18), who are extremely sensitive to the judgment of their peers. It also means that, realistically, their employment opportunities and earning power are limited. Because of their age and very real need, they are uniquely vulnerable to exploitation — from gangs or crews who want boys to sell drugs or girls to sell sex.

The report uses teens' own words to tell the story and to draw on findings to make recommendations for policy and practice. (<http://apps.urban.org/features/food-insecurity/impossible-choices-handout.pdf>)

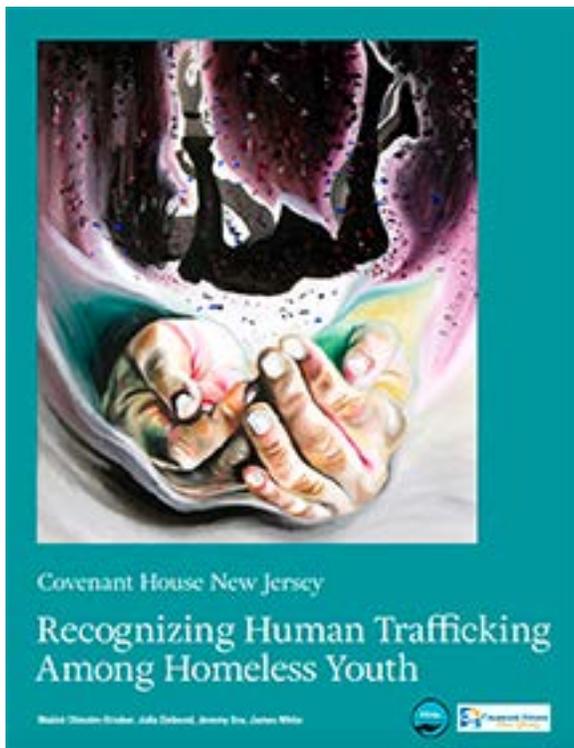


Advocacy

Covenant House

Covenant House is an international not-for-profit federation that has become the largest private charity providing shelter and supportive services to homeless youth in the Americas. Since the first Covenant House opened its doors in 1972, the organization has established sites in 30 cities across six countries in North and Central America. In 2016, 10,318 youth stayed overnight in one of Covenant House’s residential programs. In addition, Covenant House’s Street Outreach and other non-residential services made nearly 37,000 contacts with youth (providing information or services).

Covenant House provides shelter, clothing, food, legal aid, mental health counseling, and basic health care to youth. Young people commonly find Covenant House through Covenant House Street Outreach efforts; drop-in center contacts; referrals from community partners, community members and Covenant House alumni; foster care systems; and internet searches.



‘Falling From Darkness Into the Light’

Matthew Bass-Purefoy, age 21, explains his artistic piece, *“Some people have darkness in their past, and when they are ready to find their way out of it Covenant House is there to catch them.”*

“The burgundy color of the darkness speaks to their dignity even in their darkest times: they are strong, royal, and hold on to faith that something good will come out of this. There is balance as they use their strength to emerge from the darkness. The hands represent Covenant House, where they hear and feel in their hearts: ‘you are safe’.”

The art was licensed by the artist to Covenant House New Jersey for use in the excerpted report.

A Protective Response Model for Youth Intervention

Young people who have experienced abuse through sex trafficking deserve to be received with the highest level of compassion and care. Professionals and communities that are charged with providing this response have largely recognized juvenile sex trafficking victims as victims, who thus should not be charged with crimes or delinquency offenses such as prostitution or truancy that are a result of trafficking offenses committed against them.

However, factors such as agency roles, state political climate, available resources and the nature of the abuse itself create complex challenges to establishing and implementing protective response models for juvenile sex trafficking victims (JSTVs). Some of the most advanced protective response models are still in their infancy and there is diverse opinion on approaches to various models.



What is a ‘Protective Response Model?’

A protective response model to juvenile sex trafficking encompasses state and federal statutes, system protocol and implementation, access to available service and community resources, and outcome measurements to evaluate effectiveness in identifying, responding to, and preventing further

Protective Response *cont. pg. 7*



Advocacy

Protective Response

cont. from pg. 6

harm. At all levels the shared goal is to prevent juveniles from becoming sex trafficking victims and ensure that youth who have been trafficked are provided with tools and support to help them heal from the trauma they have endured, and create and sustain a life away from trafficking.

Ten Protective Response Model Premises

1. Non-criminalization.

The criminal justice and delinquency systems are not the right place to respond to juvenile sex trafficking victims. Minors cannot commit the crime of prostitution and must not be held culpable for non-violent offenses committed as a direct result of their being trafficked. Federal law clearly defines any commercial sex act with a person under age 18 as human trafficking. All corresponding language should reflect this definition. The term 'prostitute' is stigmatizing and has no place in the response to sex trafficking.

2. Trauma-informed.

All victims of crimes, including JSTVs, should be met with a trauma-informed approach. Professionals working with JSTVs must recognize 'delinquent behavior' as a symptom of trafficking-related trauma or earlier abuse. While this is true for many children in care, it is especially relevant for youth who may not be 'asking for help' and may be resistant to initial service interventions.

3. Empowerment approach.

Juveniles that are victims of sex trafficking are strong, intelligent and resilient people. Services must be centered in what the child needs and wants and may change over time. An essential element of the empowerment

approach is provision of a funded advocate who will support the child in any system response and at any point in the services continuum.

4. Safety concerns addressed.

Safety concerns present a particular challenge when creating a service plan for victims. State licensing and mental health procedures for young people who present as harmful to themselves or others should always be considered when connecting youth to services. Traditional government requirements for contracted providers should be re-examined for potential safety gaps that may include restrictions on readmission of a victim who leaves a placement, or placing other youth in care with a victim who may recruit them into sex trafficking. There is a lack of consensus on when restrictive or forced services should be provided to keep young people with severe trauma bonding safe from re-exploitation. Some victim advocates maintain that certain behaviors related to trauma-bonding, such as running away or recruitment of other young people, warrant higher security, while others worry that restrictive services may re-traumatize victims.

5. Proactive ID efforts.

The primary reason JSTVs do not receive appropriate services is that they are simply not recognized. Mandatory, high quality, tailored training focused on victim identification is essential, as are proactive identification protocols that recognize identification may happen through screening tools or a first responder emergency response, and may happen long after a victim is in treatment for physical or mental health. A validated screening tool should be used to identify victims so as to avoid inconsistencies that impact the ability to evaluate outcomes.

6. Flexible.

State and tribal agencies and community-based nonprofit service providers

play roles in any protective response model. Individual service plans should be rooted in the victim's preferences and should be informed by a host of considerations including gender, culture, prior trauma, mental health needs and safety concerns.

7. Accessible array of funded, specialized services.

Laws must ensure access to federal, state, tribal and local services, such as child welfare, child advocacy centers, and Medicaid for all JSTVs regardless of whether there is an identified trafficker, and whether they are in state or home custody. If emergency assessments are needed, safe, youth-friendly environments should be available 24/7 with an advocate supporting a victim through assessment and while in care.

8. Established protocols.

Formal protocols defining professional and agency roles and responsibilities are essential. Training should not just focus on impact of victimization but should also prepare first responders for the challenges associated with the healing process. Whenever possible, priority should be placed on incorporating leadership from sex trafficking survivors who have attained the professional/academic standing to effectively create, implement and evaluate these protocols.

9. Continuity and consistency in support.

Scope and scalability of existing infrastructures across wide geographical areas are needed to allow for youth to transition through programs without losing the continuity of care in their community. There should be a primary advocate for the victim regardless of what system(s) or where the child is in a continuum of care. When possible, the child should have a say in decisions as to whom that advocate is.

10. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

While the field strives to identify sustainable solutions, there must be transparency and understanding about the expense and duration of needed services.

(http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/JRC_ResponseModel_Spreads_web.pdf)



Action

Toll-Free 24/7 Hotline
National Human Trafficking
Resource Center
1.888.3737.888
Text 'Help' at: BeFree
(233733)

Things You Can Do

Two Anti-Trafficking Bills to Support

HR 466

Laws are needed to fight demand for commercial sex, since demand has been shown to increase sex trafficking – both the trafficking of minors, and the use of adults for sex through the use of force, fraud or coercion. The “*Sex Trafficking Demand Reduction Act*,” (HR 466), if passed, would become part of the *Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act* and help determine the ranking of countries in their efforts to fight human trafficking. Under HR 466, countries that had voted on a national level to legalize or decriminalize purchasing sex would no longer be able to claim they are fighting the demand for commercial sex. The bill’s passage would send a clear message about the damage caused by legalizing the sale of others, in the U.S. and abroad.

“*It makes a big statement about the inextricable link between legalized or decriminalized sex buying, and trafficking of vulnerable populations,*” stated a senior director of *Shared Hope International*, the nonprofit that works to fight trafficking.

Protecting Innocence: How Is Your State Doing?

Download your state’s report card to find out how your state is doing in passing laws to fight child sex trafficking. Share with your friends and encourage your state to #raisethegrade.

Go to:

<http://sharedhope.org/what-we-do/bring-justice/reportcards/>

HR 1865

The “*Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017*” could prevent the repugnant online advertising of young people for sex, and remove the smokescreen that advertisers have hidden behind when they do online what is not legal in real life – create a marketplace to sell people, often children, for sex.

In a handful of court cases brought by advocates for human trafficking victims, *Backpage.com*, considered the largest online advertiser of prostitution, has been able to repeatedly avoid criminal and civil liability for its role in facilitating sex trafficking, arguing that it has immunity under the *Communications Decency Act*. The Act was created in 1996 to regulate internet pornography, but Section 230 of the bill protects websites like Facebook, Twitter and others that present user-generated content, from being sued for the speech other people publish on their public bulletin boards.

The Act, however, was never intended to protect activities that are illegal in real life, like selling guns or drugs, especially when the website is knowingly profiting from the criminal activity. The Act should not protect websites that help pimps sell children for sex.

According to the *National Center for Missing and Exploited Children*, 70% of the child trafficking reports they received annually involved ads on *Backpage.com*. Although the site closed its adult section in January 2017, its women-seeking-men page is in many ways indistinguishable from an online brothel, and terms the site’s managers

Informative Web Sites: (Each contains information related to human trafficking)

Homeless Youth Covenant House

<https://www.covenanthouse.org/homeless-issues/human-trafficking>

U.Penn Study

<http://covenanthousestudy.org/docs/Penn-Research-Results.pdf>

Loyola Study

<http://covenanthousestudy.org/docs/Loyola-Research-Results.pdf>

Human Trafficking Interview and Assessment Measure

<http://renewalforum.org/wp-content/uploads/Covenant-house-assessment.pdf>

Impossible Choices

<http://apps.urban.org/features/food-insecurity/impossible-choices-handout.pdf>

had banned – like “*new in town*” – are still easy to find.

HR 1865, introduced in April 2017 by Rep. Ann Wagner (R-MO), would open *Backpage.com* and similar sites to prosecution from state law enforcement officials; would allow people sold on such sites to sue them for civil damages; and would make cases against the websites easier to press in court.

Advocates of a free internet complain that free speech would be curtailed by HR 1865. Yet we know yelling “*Fire!*” in a theater is not protected speech.

Why allow, “*Buy this child’s body!*”? (<https://www.covenanthouse.org/charity-blog/blog/two-anti-trafficking-bills-cheer>)

Ask Your Representatives to Support These Bills

Go to:

<http://whoismyrepresentative.com/>

Stop Trafficking! is dedicated exclusively to fostering an exchange of information among USCSAHT members and organizations, collaborating to eliminate all forms of human trafficking.

To access back issues of *Stop Trafficking!*, go to: <http://www.stopenslavement.org/>

To contribute information, please contact: jeansds@stopenslavement.org

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