



Human Trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world. Traffickers reap billions in profits by using force, fraud or coercion to rob victims of their freedom. And while there are approximately 14,500-17,500 human beings trafficked *into* the U.S. each year, it is estimated that thousands of U.S. citizens are trafficked *within* the United States.

In Pennsylvania, victims of sex and labor trafficking include both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. Sex trafficking occurs in pimp-controlled street prostitution, commercial-front massage parlors, and closed-network residential brothels. Victims are increasingly advertised on internet sites like Craigslist. Cases over the past few years in the state have included sex trafficking of minors as well as adults. Victims of labor trafficking are typically found in domestic servitude, agriculture, nail salons, and even in traveling sales crews selling candy or magazine subscriptions. Victims of human trafficking face a horrific life in which they are threatened, beaten, raped, starved, locked up, or psychologically tortured.

Pennsylvania is a “pass through” state as well as a destination for human trafficking. In addition to the commercial front businesses such as massage parlors, nail salons, agricultural operations and hotels or motels that human traffickers utilize, Pennsylvania is also a “pass through” state due to the many interstate highways that connect major trafficking hotspots in Ohio and New York. Many truck stops, especially those along the “Miracle Mile” are known for playing host to sex trafficking.

In 2006 the Pennsylvania legislature made human trafficking a second degree felony, unless the perpetrator injures the victim or the victim is under 18, in which case it is a first degree felony. In addition, traffickers will face forfeiture of any assets associated with the crime – potentially providing the state with **tens of thousands of dollars**. However, since enactment, the state has yet to utilize the law. This is likely due to:

- a common misconception that only the federal government can take effective action in cases of human trafficking, when in truth, more often it is local and state law enforcement and victim service providers who come into direct contact with it;
- victims of trafficking are usually kept isolated from society and are often seen as prostitutes who choose to be “in the life” or as “illegals” whom society may disregard;
- lack of knowledge or training of law enforcement and community members on how to identify and respond to human trafficking cases;
- a lack of coordination between law enforcement, prosecutors, victim service providers and the public on human trafficking cases, training, action plans, and victim resources; and no centralized venue to convey information on responding to the crime of human trafficking.

Two Important Bills will Soon be Introduced to Improve the State Response to Human Trafficking

1. Mandatory Posting of the National Human Trafficking Hotline (1-888-3737-888)

Sponsors: Senators Daylin Leach and Pat Vance

This bipartisan legislation will mandate that certain agencies and organizations post the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline (NHTRC). The NHTRC Hotline is funded primarily through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is operated by a non-profit organization. Call specialists field calls 24 hours a day/7 days a week, in over 100 languages and are able to provide an immediate response to urgent calls and tips by connecting callers to one of over 3,000 local referral organizations. It provides assistance to victims, information and training on human trafficking. Calls are confidential and can be anonymous – providing a critical service to victims and those who wish to provide tips but may be reluctant to contact law enforcement directly.

The 2010 Pennsylvania Legislation to Improve the State's Human Trafficking Law

(continued)

Ideal strategic placement of the Hotline in Pennsylvania includes government-licensed and private enterprises that target victims in transit (truck stops, bus stations, rest stops), victims “at work” and “customers” in known sex or labor trafficking venues (certain hotels/motels, strip clubs, agricultural facilities), and community members and law enforcement who routinely work with the public (in police stations, DMV, medical facilities or clinics).

2. **Creation of the PA State Human Trafficking Task Force / Advisory Committee**

Sponsors: Senator Stewart Greenleaf and Representative Katie True

This important resolution will establish the Pennsylvania Human Trafficking Advisory Committee, consisting of key personnel, organizations and agencies to develop and implement a plan to end trafficking in Pennsylvania. The statewide task force will build off of existing coalitions in the state including those in Philadelphia, York and Pittsburgh, and will have local, state and federal participants.

While there are 40 federally funded human trafficking task forces, there are many unfunded task forces which present a formidable force in addressing trafficking. Such task forces are instrumental in coordinating a comprehensive statewide approach to ending this brutal crime through the prosecution of traffickers, the identification of victims, providing services, and significantly enhancing community awareness.

*****WHAT YOU CAN DO*****

Contacting your legislators in person, by phone and by email is the best way to ensure that human trafficking is recognized as a serious crime and that legislators take steps to address it. While personal visits are the most effective, calls and emails are helpful – and you don't need to be an expert or have any experience in lobbying to take part! Here is what you can do:

1. Determine who your legislators are by going to: www.legis.state.pa.us, and enter your zip code in the far right box. Pennsylvania residents have one senator and one representative.
2. Please call your legislators (you will likely talk to a staff member) and urge them to cosponsor the anti-human trafficking legislation above. Note that there will not be a number for the bill until after it is introduced. Here is an example of what you can say, but please personalize your message:

“Hi, my name is [], and I am a constituent of []. I am calling to urge [] to cosponsor legislation to help end human trafficking in Pennsylvania. The first requires posting of the National Human Trafficking Hotline by certain establishments, and the second is a resolution to establishes the Pennsylvania Human Trafficking Advisory Committee. Will the Senator/Representative support and cosponsor this important legislation?”

If your legislators would like more information or wish to cosponsor, ask them to contact the sponsors (Hotline Bill: Senator Leach or Vance; Task Force Bill: Senator Greenleaf or Representative True).

3. After you make your call, please follow up with a short email to thank them for their time (even if you spoke to a staff person) and restate your message of what you would like them to do.
4. Lastly, please urge everyone you know to make the same call!

If you should have any questions or have heard back from your legislators about cosponsoring these bills, please email Julie Janovsky at jjanovsky@polarisproject.org.

Thank you for taking action to end human trafficking in Pennsylvania!