

Creating a Sex-Traffick-Free Evanston

(I) Introduction

In February of 2018, a sex trafficking ring, utilizing a number of apartments, was broken up in the Optima apartment building near the border of Evanston and Skokie. A mother, living with her young son near one of the apartments men used to purchase sex described a “constant flow” of men entering and leaving the apartment at all hours of the day and night.ⁱ

Evanston and Skokie are near large thoroughfares and convenient to men living on the North Shore as well as in Chicago. A majority of the estimated 250,000 Chicagoland men who purchase sex annually are in long-term relationships and have the wealth needed to fund this violent and expensive habit. It is estimated that between 16,000-25,000 individuals, mainly girls under the age of 18, are caught in Chicagoland’s sex trafficking activities every year; the majority are American citizens born in this country.ⁱⁱ

For over five years, the Jewish Community Against Sex Trafficking (JCAST) Chicago has mobilized a grassroots movement to build awareness of sex trafficking, end demand, and support survivors. As part of this effort, the organization is reaching out to legislators and other government leaders to build support for critical legislation and policies as well as advocate for an increase in the amount of resources combating this multi-billion dollar industry.

This white paper outlines current Illinois laws and other laws passed by municipalities across the country to combat sex trafficking. JCAST Chicago hopes this will be the first step in eliminating these activities in Evanston and eventually in the Chicagoland area.

(II) Defining Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking is a form of gender-based violence and a part of the #MeToo movement. Similar to the general community’s knowledge of domestic violence in the 1970’s, sex trafficking is widely misunderstood. Few residents of the North Shore, including Evanston, comprehend the ubiquitous nature of sex trafficking and how their purchase of sex and viewing of pornography are connected to and fuel violence against the young girls, boys, and adults trapped in the abuse.

Sex trafficking is a part of human trafficking, defined as “the use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain some type of labor [or sexual act in the case of sex trafficking].”ⁱⁱⁱ For victims under the age of eighteen, force, fraud, or coercion is not required. According to the United Nations’ International Labour Organization, sex trafficking is a \$99 billion-a-year global industry, exploiting more than 1 million children.^{iv} One website, TheEroticReview.com, which offers contact information, pricing, and services for over 75,000 prostituted individuals, has over 250,000 unique users daily.^v

The U.S. is not immune to this crisis. Sex trafficking is a \$15.5 billion industry in industrialized countries alone. In the United States, it is estimated that every year 10,000 children are caught in sex trafficking and each victim is raped a minimum of five times a day.^{vi} In a survey of American men, 14% reported paying for sex at least once in their lives.^{vii} Data from the Southern Illinois University ranks Illinois 8th in the nation in human trafficking cases but only a quarter of people in the Chicago area, including Evanston, believe sex trafficking affects their community.^{viii}

Many youth are first caught up in sex trafficking as a means of survival. According to a variety of studies, almost one third of runaway or locked out youth exchange sex for food, shelter, or drugs.^{ix} Survival sex is defined as: "(circumstantially forced) prostitution engaged in by a person because of their extreme need. It describes the practice of people who are homeless or otherwise disadvantaged in society trading sex for food, a place to sleep, or other basic needs or for drugs."^x More than half of Chicago's prostitutes are homeless and one out of every three runaway or locked out teens (among whom over a third identify as LGBTQ^{xi}), are trafficked within forty-eight hours of leaving their homes. Compounding the harm, many victims of sex trafficking are also victims of child sexual abuse and/or are wards of the state.

Men often see the purchase of sex as a right of passage. The average age a man first purchases sex is 21 and some fathers purchase their son's first sexual experience. Men who purchase sex in Chicago vary in age, race, education, and income level.^{xii} In fact, 79% of purchasers have attended at least some college and 62% also have a spouse or other consistent, long-term partner. More than half (53%) of men purchased sex from women as frequently as once per month up to several times per week. Most important for the work of deterrence, one study found only 7% of men who have purchased sex have ever been arrested for soliciting a woman in prostitution.^{xiii}

(III) Developing a Sex Traffick-Free Evanston

The goal of this white paper is to provide resources to community leaders supporting the development of a sex traffick-free Evanston community. Combating sex trafficking requires community awareness and education of sex trafficking red flags, as well as a prioritization of resources by police and other legal and government officials. Often victims are lured in plain sight, remain a part of the community, and are connected to legal businesses and services. For example, doctors and other health care providers provide services to victims of sex trafficking since in the last year 16% of individuals active in prostitution report being assaulted by one of their clients and many pimps use violence to control the individuals they sell. Additionally, many individuals caught in sex trafficking are treated for sexually transmitted infections and HIV.^{xiv} Others are purchased in legal business establishments including hotels and massage parlors. By implementing and utilizing local, state, and federal laws to arrest, fine, and otherwise hold purchasers accountable, as well as pimps and traffickers, communities will deter demand as well as increase visibility and awareness.

Due to the complicated nature of sex trafficking, many laws and regulations are used to combat sex trafficking and hold those perpetuating the abuse and victimization accountable. These laws include: safe harbor, illegal drug purchase and sale, asset forfeiture, solicitation of prostitution, and a number of civil remedies. Since many victims of sex trafficking are also victims of violence earlier in their lives, including child sexual assault and rape, and are often wards of the state, directing resources to support

children in precarious situations and providing mental health and other services for those experiencing trauma will limit the number of teens and young adults susceptible to sex trafficking.

The complicated nature of the crime also affirms the need for consistent training of police and other legal personnel. Necessary education includes building knowledge of red flags to identify victims and perpetrators; clarifying the need for services, rather than punishment, for those caught in sex trafficking; increasing understanding of the trauma individuals caught in sex trafficking endure; and expanding understanding of the resources provided by nonprofits and other community partners to enhance the effectiveness of referrals.

Additionally, since survivors of sex trafficking have few resources, often suffer years of abuse, and are forced by their perpetrators to participate in other crimes while caught in sex trafficking activities, providing legal and direct services, including housing; mental and physical health care; and legal representation for multiple years is essential. Since it is difficult for many with a criminal record to attain employment, obtain housing, and rebuild relationships with their children and other family, government leaders should evaluate the laws surrounding certain crimes and the waiting periods required before crimes can be vacated and expunged.

(IV) Evaluating Laws and Regulations

Illinois is on the forefront of combating sex trafficking activities through the passage of critical state laws, but resources are needed to fund awareness campaigns, training, and additional law enforcement activities. These laws include Public Act 100-692^{xv} signed into law in September, 2018. Sponsored by State Senator Toi Hutchinson, the new act creates an opportunity for human trafficking survivors to apply to a judge to seal their criminal records after their sentences are completed. Unlike Public Act 100-285^{xvi}, signed August 2017, which automatically expunges juvenile arrest records not resulting in delinquency, legal services, and awareness, education is essential to ensure survivors have the opportunity to take advantage of 100-692. Similarly resources funding awareness campaigns; increasing inspection of businesses that often are fronts for sex trafficking activities; and developing services to prevent youth from entering and for survivors exiting sex trafficking activities are critical to enhance effectiveness of other existing laws. Additionally, education and training of police and other law enforcement is essential to enhancing efforts to hold pimps and buyers accountable for their illegal acts.

Between 2010 and 2015, the End Demand Campaign, a project of the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE), led to the passage of six laws to combat sex trafficking in Illinois.^{xvii} These laws included: 1) the first in the nation to protect minors from prosecution for prostitution, 2) the elimination of felony prostitution, 3) an affirmative defense for those accused of prostitution due to sex trafficking, 4) clearing all records of prostitution convictions for survivors of sex trafficking and 5) creating a fund that directs fines and resources forfeited due to sex trafficking activities to services for survivors. This fund is currently empty, leading to a dearth of state-funded resources focused on combating sex trafficking, helping survivors, and holding buyers and pimps accountable.

Other states and localities are also pursuing efforts to combat sex trafficking. For example, Houston created a multi-media awareness campaign educating different sectors of the community, passed a new massage parlor ordinance and also coordinates direct services, including housing and health care, throughout the city. The city's new massage parlor ordinance, passed unanimously in 2015 by the

Houston City Council, closed a loophole preventing police from entering establishments suspected of being connected to sex trafficking activities.^{xviii}

Many cities and states are also focused on businesses that are often fronts for sex trafficking. Similar to Houston, municipalities in multiple states, including Kansas and Iowa, passed ordinances regulating massage parlors operating in the communities.^{xix} In addition to requiring massage parlors to be licensed, a number of Arizona cities, including Mesa and Phoenix^{xx}, passed ordinances creating license requirements for escort services.^{xxi}

The connection between hotels/motels and sex trafficking is also leading to new legislation and litigation. Hotels in Houston are among a group of defendants in a suit filed by an individual trafficked in their hotel.^{xxii} And in Florida, legislators are considering legislation allowing sex trafficking victims to sue hotels.^{xxiii} In Baton Rouge, city leaders passed an ordinance, modeled after an ordinance passed by Jefferson Parish, requiring hotels and motels to have a permit to operate legally. The permit could be revoked if three sex trafficking calls occur within a ninety day period.^{xxiv} Other hotels are realizing combating sex trafficking is good business and instituting specific training for employees on their own.^{xxv}

By enhancing safe harbor laws, states provide safety to survivors exiting sex trafficking and encouragement to them to testify against their buyers and pimps. Florida enhanced their safe harbor law in 2012 by strengthening the protections provided to sexually exploited children regardless of their immigration or citizenship status. The amended law also emphasized the need to protect all children and, state's responsibility to fund critical services including mental health and housing for these children.^{xxvi}

Minnesota examined and enhanced many of their laws to better protect sex trafficking victims and provide \$3 million in funding for housing and shelter for sex trafficking survivors.^{xxvii} It passed a safe harbor law in 2011 and extended protections from the age of 18 to 24 in 2016.^{xxviii} The state also developed a statewide multi-agency awareness campaign coordinated with the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Health, and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. These efforts led to more than 1,400 survivors obtaining housing and social services between 2012 and 2015.^{xxix}

In July of 2018, the Seattle area created a multi sector awareness campaign. King County, which includes Seattle, partnered with city leaders and the Port of Seattle to develop a campaign to:

- Raise public awareness about the nature of human trafficking, how and where it occurs locally, and how to prevent and stop it;
- Help identify victims and promote access to victim services; and
- Decrease demand in trafficking.

Later this year, partners plan on placing signs and other materials in Metro and Sound Transit buses as well as on trolleys, street cars, transit centers and stations, and in the Sea-Tac Airport. The effort stemmed from a 2013 campaign which placed signs in 200 city buses and billboards. The campaign increased calls from around the state to the National Human Trafficking hotline by 500 percent.^{xxx}

(V) Conclusion

As the sex trafficking ring at Skokie's Optima Building illustrates, sex trafficking is occurring throughout the Chicagoland area. Often pimps and others profiting off of this horrendous crime of modern day slavery choose Skokie and Evanston because of their mid-point convenient locations between Chicago and the North Shore. Sex trafficking is successful because awareness remains low. JCAST Chicago is excited to partner with Evanston nonprofits and leaders to develop a sex traffic-free community that is on the forefront of combating sex trafficking and can be a model for communities throughout the state and across the country. This white paper offers an outline of sex trafficking developments and innovative legislation and policies developed throughout the country that Evanston leaders can use as models to enhance efforts to combat sex trafficking in the area.

JCAST Chicago

The Jewish Community Against Sex Trafficking (JCAST) Chicago, an initiative of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) Chicago North Shore, changes cultural norms, builds a broader understanding of the threat of sex trafficking, and encourages support for sex trafficking survivors. JCAST Chicago expands awareness of the connection between paid sex, pornography, bars with strippers and dancers, and other legal businesses and sex trafficking -- thereby ending demand for prostitution and freeing women, men and children trapped in this violent multi-billion dollar industry. For more information, visit our website at www.jcastchicago.org

Sample Legislation

- Massage Parlor Licensing- City of Johnston, Iowa: <https://www.cityofjohnston.com/DocumentCenter/View/1637/Massage-Therapy-Business-Licensing---Ordinance-No-940?bidId=>
- Massage Parlor Licensing- City of Wichita, Kansas: <http://www.wichita.gov/Licenses/Licenses/Massage%20Parlor%20Ordinance%2050-248.pdf#search=message%20parlor%20license>
- Escort Services Licensing- City of Tempe, Arizona: <https://www.tempe.gov/home/showdocument?id=4646>
- Safe Harbor Law- State of Minnesota: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/145.4716>
- Safe Harbor Law- State of Florida: <http://laws.flrules.org/2012/105>

ⁱ <http://www.fox32chicago.com/news/local/witness-speaks-on-sex-trafficking-ring-in-skokie-apartments-all-day-long>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.issueab.org/resources/1190/1190.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/what-human-trafficking>

^{iv} <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/nation-now/2018/01/30/sex-trafficking-column/1073459001/>

^v <https://www.demandabolition.org/research/facts-men-buy-sex/>

^{vi} <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/nation-now/2018/01/30/sex-trafficking-column/1073459001/>

^{vii} <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0306624X13480487>

^{viii} <https://news.siu.edu/2017/05/050117par17072.php>

^{ix} <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/27/us/27runaways.html>

^x K. D. Roche, Speaker of *Serving LGBTQ Survivors of Human Trafficking: Specific Considerations for TGNC Youth and Best Practices* at the Cook County Human Trafficking Task Force 2018 Conference, August 3, 2018.

^{xi} <http://projectfiercechicago.org/problem-statement/>

^{xii} <https://www.businessinsider.com/paying-for-sex-is-not-as-common-as-once-thought-2013-3>

^{xiii} http://media.virbcdn.com/files/37/FileItem-258083-KtF_ProstitutioninChicago.pdf

^{xiv} <https://www.demandabolition.org/research/facts-men-buy-sex/>

^{xv} <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/100/100-0692.htm>

^{xvi} <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/100/100-0285.htm>

^{xvii} <http://caase.org/six-laws-in-six-years>

^{xviii} <http://humantraffickinghouston.org/toolkits/massage-establishment-ordinance-toolkit/>

^{xix} <https://www.cityofjohnston.com/DocumentCenter/View/1637/Massage-Therapy-Business-Licensing---Ordinance-No-940?bidId=>

^{xx} <https://www.phoenix.gov/cityclerk/services/licensing/regbusinfo/escorts>

^{xxi} http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/news/mesa-aims-at-prostitution-human-trafficking-with-new-ordinance/article_fdee17a2-dc17-11e6-8581-a39bf10b8e52.html

^{xxii} <https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/2018/01/24/263612/pioneering-lawsuit-about-human-trafficking-and-sexual-exploitation-filed-in-houston/>

^{xxiii} <https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/buzz/2018/02/13/this-bill-would-allow-trafficking-victims-to-sue-hotels-hotels-dont-like-it/>

^{xxiv} https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/article_ac478eb0-0132-11e8-be36-6bb6c3a45ac0.html

^{xxv} <https://www.fastcompany.com/40510138/hotels-are-key-in-the-fight-to-end-human-trafficking>

^{xxvi} <http://laws.flrules.org/2012/105>

^{xxvii} [http://www.mncourts.gov/mncourtsgov/media/scao_library/CJI/16b-Sexually-Exploited-Youth-Safe-Harbor-Powerpoint-\(L-Ryan\).pdf](http://www.mncourts.gov/mncourtsgov/media/scao_library/CJI/16b-Sexually-Exploited-Youth-Safe-Harbor-Powerpoint-(L-Ryan).pdf)

^{xxviii} <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/145.4716>

^{xxix} <http://www.minnesotamonthly.com/Minnesota-Life/A-Closer-Look-at-Minnesotas-Sex-Trafficking-Problem/>

^{xxx} <https://www.kingcounty.gov/council/news/2018/July/07-30-Trafficking.aspx>