Human Trafficking: The Need for Action

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Abstract

Human Trafficking in a growing epidemic that can target anyone. Traffickers use many methods of targeting victims mainly through force, fraud, and coercion, but focus the most on targeting at-risk youth who lack self-esteem. Current anti-trafficking laws like the Trafficking Victims Protect Act and its reauthorization acts lack a fundamental piece of legislation. Educating the public against human trafficking is the flaw in the TVPA and its adaptations over the years. What makes trafficking one of the most dangerous crimes against the public is that there is not one specific profile for law enforcement to track and prosecute. Traffickers can originate from any background, career, or position of trust. The work being done with private educational programs are placing a dent in trafficking numbers; however, a legislatively mandated program would help cease the flow of victims into the life of a human trafficking victim.

Human Trafficking: The Need for Action

Human Trafficking is defined as the “use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person into commercial sex acts or labor against their will” (Polaris, 2022). It is known as modern day slavery and produces an approximate yearly profit of $150 billion worldwide (Human Rights First, 2017). Although there is significant legislation that offers prosecutors tools in holding traffickers accountable for their atrocious behavior current legislation lacks an educational piece. The Department of Justice (DOJ) started the fight against human trafficking back in 2000 and has had some incremental successes with new updated legislation from Congress, but it is time now to renew and update the laws to protect the most vulnerable population which are the transient and the low self-esteemed. As Human Trafficking becomes more and more prevalent in “everyday neighborhoods” the more in depth look law enforcement, academia, public health systems and researchers receive into trafficking practices.

The article titled, “The Rise in Popularity of Cryptocurrency and Associated Criminal Activity” is written by Kethineni and Cao and describes the different ways and how cryptocurrency can affect criminal activity on the web and in person. **“**In the United States, the Financial Action Task Force defines virtual currency (cryptocurrency) as ‘a digital representation of value that can be digitally traded and functions as a medium of exchange; and/or a unit of account; and/or a store of value but does not have legal tender status issued nor guaranteed by any jurisdiction”(Sesha & Ying, 2020).

As of 2018, there were over 1,800 different types of cryptocurrencies in circulation and secure methods of transference are highly rampant in transactions that occur with any of these 1,800 digital currencies. In regard to criminal activity, mainly online criminal activity, the use of virtual currency especially bitcoin (BTC) is a high priority.

The use of BTC is preferred by criminals and their enterprises because of its many perks to include its global outreach, decentralization of storage, the speed of transmissions and exchanges, the use of usage, and the lack of legal deterrence (Sesha & Ying, 2020). Many users on the dark web; the part of the internet where illegal business is conducted; use crypto currency to protect their identity because of the different number of methods to hide their identity.

Upon analysis of several different viewpoints in the financial sector of the government the IRS has ruled that if digital currency is taxable property and if it is used as a payment, it should be treated as legal tender and treated as currency (Sesha & Ying, 2020). This is how several traffickers, who operate through the anonymous dark web, stay unknown when dealing with several different groups of people. According to Bloomberg, the Silk Road, the first and most well-known dark web site has accepted the use of virtual currency as the only source of payment when dealing with users’ activities these include illegal smuggling of good and trafficking to begin with the most common activities (Sesha & Ying, 2020).

In 2017 alone there were 51 domestic cases of illegal activity that used digital currency and 73 cases of international use; these illegal activity cases drive more traffic to dark web sites thus increasing the traffic to the postings for trafficking victims and increases the victim’s chance of being revictimized. The biggest problem with BTC is that it is relatively unknown by forensic accountants so when audits are conducted of businesses utilizing BTC as a payment for trafficking related services there is no flags being raised in the investigation due to a lack of knowledge (Sesha & Ying, 2020).

Human Trafficking is a Problem

The Department of Justice started their Anti-Human Trafficking Program in 2000 which gradually transitioned to the Office for Violence Against Women. The DOJ program involved officers who conduct human trafficking investigations and facilitate the prosecutions of trafficking violators. The program also provides grant funding for victim services along with spearheading several anti-trafficking taskforces.

These Taskforces conduct trainings, research, and outreach initiatives and also produces the annual Attorney General’s Trafficking in Persons Report. Prior to 2000, trafficking was rampant. There was a lack of protection programs offered, prevention methods were non- existent, and prosecution efforts were muddied with lack of evidence and high evidentiary thresholds (citation needed). With the assistance of key legislation that has been passed starting with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 significant steps have been made to help stop trafficking efforts from those who are thriving in a hard to prosecute world of human rights violations.

Key Legislation Amendments

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 was passed with the purpose of providing actionable steps for law enforcement which take the form of the 3 P’s: Protection, Prosecution and Prevention (113th Congress, 2013). The TVPA provided increased protections for trafficking victims in the United States in several keyways mainly by making foreign victims eligible for federally funded or administered health and other benefits and services and by requiring federal agencies to expand the provision of such benefits and services to victims, regardless of their immigration status.

The TVPA also created immigration protections for foreign victims of human trafficking. The TVPA improved the ability of federal prosecutors to bring human traffickers to justice for their crimes. Prior to the TVPA, criminal laws were narrow in the scope of law and offered traffickers several loopholes to escape prosecution. The TVPA addressed the shortcomings of existing law by adding new criminal provisions prohibiting forced labor, trafficking with respect to peonage, slavery, involuntary servitude, or forced labor, and sex trafficking of children or by force, fraud, or coercion. It also criminalized attempts to engage in these activities, mandating that traffickers pay restitution to their victims, and providing for forfeiture and strengthening penalties for existing trafficking crimes.

The TVPA also strengthened the government’s prevention efforts by starting new international initiatives and carried out programs to improve economic opportunity for potential victims as a means of deterring trafficking. The biggest outcome from the TVPA was the creation of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons within the Department of State. This office publishes annual reports that describe and rank the efforts of countries to combat human trafficking. The TIP Report is the U.S. Government’s principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking. The TVPA also required the President to establish an Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking. This group of cabinet-level officials are charged with measuring and evaluating the progress of the United States and other countries in preventing human trafficking, protecting its victims, and prosecuting its perpetrators (Congress, 2000).

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 was written to redo the definitions of criminal provisions around the charges of human trafficking and also added human trafficking crimes as a Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) predicate and created a civil remedy enabling trafficking victims to file lawsuits against their traffickers in federal district court (Congress, 2003). The TVPRA 2003 also established a policy group within the executive branch consisting of senior officials from federal agencies which oversaw the mandated annual report from the Attorney General to Congress about anti-human trafficking actions.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 provided extraterritorial jurisdiction over trafficking offenses committed overseas by individuals employed by the government. This statute continued to further awareness of trafficking by establishing a grant program to develop, expand, and strengthen assistance for trafficking victims and directed the Department of Health and Human Services to establish and implement a pilot program to provide benefits and services for juvenile trafficking victims (Congress, 2006). The TVPRA 2005 was fundamental in expanding the reporting requirements of the TVPRA 2003 with the creation of The Office on Violence Against Women.

The William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 imposed new countermeasures to prevent and deter trafficking by hold traffickers accountable. The countermeasures included creating new crimes for obstruction or attempting to obstruct the investigation and prosecution of trafficking crimes; allowing the prosecution of sex traffickers who recklessly disregarded; maliciously set aside the knowledge; the fact that force, fraud, or coercion would be used against the victim; eliminated the requirement to prove the defendant knew a sex trafficking victim was a minor in cases where the defendant had a reasonable opportunity to observe the minor; expanded the crime of forced labor by stating that “force” includes the abuse or threatened abuse of legal process; increased the penalty for conspiring to commit trafficking-related crimes; and penalizing those who knowingly benefit financially from participating in trafficking crimes (Congress, 2008).

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2013 focused on eliminating human trafficking from the supply chain of goods. This means that the U.S. government now refused to use items, products, or materials produced or extracted with the use and labor of trafficking victims and that those entities do not contribute to trafficking in persons involving sexual exploitation. This Act also strengthened the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking used by Department of State to describe the anti-trafficking efforts of U.S. and foreign governments in its annual TIP Report as well as started the mandated record keeping of trafficking related cases by the FBI.

The biggest improvement with the TVPRA 2013 was that is amended the federal criminal code to first subject U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens who reside overseas and engage in illegal sexual conduct with a person under 18 years of age to a fine or imprisonment or both. The second alteration to the federal code was to subject a person who knowingly destroys, conceals, removes, confiscates, or possesses certain immigration documents to a fine or imprisonment or both along with extending the statute of limitations for a person to bring a civil action for an injury received while the person was a minor that was caused by certain sex- or forced labor-related violations of federal criminal law (113th Congress, 2013).

The most recent legislation, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (JVTA) of 2015, added several key elements to federal trafficking laws. The JVTA 2015 added “patronizes” and “solicits” to 18 U.S.C. 1591(a) to facilitate prosecution of customers of sex trafficking victims.; “advertises” to the modes of commission of an offense under 18 U.S.C. 1591 when there is proof that the defendant knew the victim being advertised was a minor or that force, fraud, or coercion would be used; amending 18 U.S.C. 1594 to direct any assets forfeited in a human trafficking case to be used to satisfy a victim restitution order. It further allows forfeiture of, for example, any asset that is involved in, or is traceable to the proceeds of, human trafficking; and added the production of child pornography to the definition of “illicit sexual conduct” as used in 18 U.S.C. 2423, which prohibits transportation and travel-conduct involving illegal sexual activity with children.

The JVTA 2015 also created a mandatory $5,000 special assessment that applies to non- indigent defendants for each count of conviction of certain offenses, including offenses set forth in Chapter 77 and Chapter 110. The revenue generated from this special assessment

would then be used to support programs that provide services to victims of human trafficking and other offenses (Congress, 2015).

FBI Human Trafficking Data Collection

The Federal Bureau of Investigation started collecting human trafficking related case material in 2013 with the passing of the TVPRA 2013. In 2013 there were only 14 cases reported to the FBI however this number is very limited due to the lack of reporting structure by police departments to the FBI. Currently there is no statistics released by the Bureau of Criminal Justice Statistics for 2021. The Department of Justice, started with an annual budget of $375,000 for anti- human trafficking related activities.

(FBI, 2019)

(Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021)

In 2015, the DOJ was able to drop its cost per case drastically with the increased protections from the TVPRA 2013, to $438 per case. Ultimately as traffickers began to know and lean the new rules, regulation and criminal codes they got better at exploiting them which led to the current cost of $664 per case (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021) (FBI, 2019). Considering where the budget per case was in 2013, the more protections offered like those in the JVTA 2015, the amount of money that needs to be spent on each case prosecuting it is lowered.

The Need for Education

With each iteration of additional legislation more protections are offered for human trafficking victims. However, there is a piece of vital information missing from each legislation piece, education for vulnerable groups.

The article titled, “Intersections between Human Trafficking and Education: Toward New Research Agendas” is written by Spires and describes how anti-trafficking organizations are stressing the importance of education in the fight against Human Trafficking. Bob Spires, from the University of Richmond, stresses that understanding how education is used as a prevention tool to trafficking is the key to gaining support for training and education programs, these programs should be targeted to the general public but in specific to law makers and policy maker to help them have a better understanding on where the shortfalls in the legislation lay and to finally fix them (Spires, 2021).

Spires finds that socio-economic issues are the biggest indicators of human trafficking vulnerability, and people living in severely impoverished communities are less likely to get the education they need to keep themselves safe and are ultimately the ones most at risk (Spires, 2021).

If educational programs are put in place to target the vulnerable populations like migrants and minorities, the awareness of trafficking, especially labor trafficking, can increase. This can be done by placing NGOs or governmental players at border crossings to conduct trainings and to share the information needed to keep oneself safe (Spires, 2021). “In order for lawmakers and the legal community to develop effective legal tools to address trafficking, these actors too must be educated comprehensively on the complex issues surrounding trafficking” (Spires, 2021).

 In terms of trafficking victims and determining vulnerable populations, vulnerable groups are also considered those that can be retraumatized.

 The article titled, “To know or not to know: Should crimes regarding photographs of their child sexual abuse be disclosed to now-adult, unknowing victims?” is written by Ost and Gillespie and describes the rights of unaware children and their sex abuse. A current debate in the Criminal Justice community is whether or not to disclose adult victims to their abuse that they sustained during childhood. The disclosure would be of sex crimes committed on them such as sex trafficking or trafficking in general. With sex trafficking consisting of physical sex abuse to victims it also includes the production of materials such as pictures of victims which many law enforcement find when seizing laptops from trafficking operations (Ost & Gillespie, 2019).

 Studies have found that it is not always the trafficking victims’ rights to learn about their childhood abuse but rather their interest about their abuse to drive their “own story” and to “recognize themselves as a survivor of sexual abuse” (Ost & Gillespie, 2019). Under 18 U.S.C.§ 3771, a victim has the right to be informed if their image is used in the commission of a prosecution so that victims may seek reparation however prosecutors have noticed that this law may sever as a constant reminder of the sexual abuse for victims or could bring up psychological stress from unknown abuse now brought to light (Ost & Gillespie, 2019).

 However, on the other hand, victims who are notified of their pictures may feel empowered and feel like they personally are holding the trafficker or abuser accountable for their crimes. The end conclusion for some victims is that they do not want to know about past sexual abuse if they were young and have no recollection of the events as to not re-traumatize themselves again (Ost & Gillespie, 2019).

Strong recommendations include partnering with the Department of Education for funding of human trafficking education programs geared to specific age groups on personal safety and confidence.

Additional proposed partnerships include local law enforcement officers especially with developing a training program for school resource officers in recognition of human trafficking victimology, and drug endangered children, this will lower rates of trafficking in schools since many victims are forced into trafficking by force, fraud or coercion especially through illegal drug dependency. Additional partnerships can be established to promote educational programs like the following:

The Trauma-Informed Approach to Human Trafficking program sponsored by Southern Arizona Trauma Informed Network offers participants the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of human trafficking, and the impact of the trauma on individuals and communities affected by this crime, as well as hear from experts working to combat this abuse in Arizona and the United States. This training will include a panel discussion by representatives from the AZ Dept. of Child Safety, Banner Diamond Children's Medical Center, Tucson Police Dept, Mercy Care, Southern Arizona Children’s Advocacy Center, McCain Institute, Dept. of Homeland Security, Pathways, and AZ Dept. of Child Safety (Southern Arizona Trauma Informed Network, 2022).

According to federal and state law, human trafficking is the exploitation of a person through force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of forced labor, commercial sex, or both. Victims of human trafficking include adults and children, both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. Human trafficking is often in plain sight and can easily be missed by professionals who serve and interact with children every day. The Human Trafficking Awareness for Childhood and Community Health Workers program sponsored by Soulful Presence offers participants the opportunity to identify the types of human trafficking and how you can recognize child victims. This workshop will assist participants to understand how child victims are recruited and controlled by perpetrators, the impact on the child and learning environment and how to prevent child trafficking (Soulful Presence, 2022).

The Human Trafficking 101 program sponsored by Rahab's Daughters offers participants the opportunity to attend a free online course that will give insight into human trafficking and how to combat it. Attendees can also learn how to team up with Rahab’s Daughters as a volunteer, donor or sponsor (Rahab's Daughters, 2022).

In May 2022, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel was joined by elected officials and community leaders Friday to educate the public and business owners on the signs of human trafficking. The round table discussion focused on Michigan’s vising population especially during its summer months. In attendance were key leaders from the hospitality industry, and local area Mayors. This meeting was finished with a briefing from the Michigan Abolitionist Project and the Michigan Human Trafficking Commission (MHTC).

Since the founding of the MHTC in 2014, there are 14 members sitting on the commission and its sole mission is to work with other governmental taskforces and service providers to improve the state’s response to the Human Trafficking problem it faces within its borders, especially with Detroit Metro International Airport (Mukomel, 2022).

During large events like the Kentucky Debry, Indy 500, and the Superbowl; to name a few major events; Human Trafficking victimizing occurs at a high rate. Yasmine Jumaa describes how to spot Trafficking at and during large events. According to research, cities and states that are along major highways and interstates such as 65, 64, 75 and 71 are more likely to experience high rates of trafficking because of the ease of access to and from the area. Human Trafficking victims tend to show some indicators especially in conversation. These indicators include, if the person appears to be very rehearsed, if a person literally has no identification with them, if children or adults appear malnourished, and finally a lack of personal possessions or poor physical or dental health (Jumaa, 2022).

The victims and perpetrators of human trafficking can vary greatly. Typical stereotypes of predators, such as the old creepy man in a white panel van, do not always apply to predators of human trafficking. There is no set mold for traffickers nor is there a set mold for victims they target (Department of Homeland Security, 2022).

In November 2020, a former principal, Marlan Burki, who was a long-time principal for several Catholic schools in Nebraska for over 14 years is currently on administrative leave for conduct violations. Burki allegedly has been producing child pornography with children that attend the schools he worked at. The Attorney General has issued over 400 subpoenas seeking records from schools and churches where Burki worked and if convicted for his crimes he could face up to 15-20 years in prison and a $250,000 dollar fine (Reist, 2020).

In May 2022, A Royal Canadian Mounted Police Officer was charged with Human Trafficking after being arrested by York Regional Police. This arrest came after a report filed by a victim after they arranged to come to Canada from Mexico to work under false pretenses.

The victim alleges very poor working conditions caring for dirty and sick animals. After a thorough investigation 44-year-old RCMP Officer Israel Yahsif Mane Minter was arrested and charged with human trafficking, forgery of documents, cruelty of animals, and three counts possession of prohibited devices under the criminal code. The investigation revealed several additional victims brought to Canada under similar false pretenses by this officer as well (Ranger, 2022).

In May 2022, a 45- year-old-man, Anthony Johnson, pled guilty to Human Trafficking. Johnson stated he had run a sex-trafficking ring from July 2003-September 2020 with his Partner 41-year-old Demetrice Deckard. This ring was based in Dallas Texas but admitted to selling victims around the country to engage in illegal acts. John is on record admitting to frequently using threats and violence to illicit compliance from his victims including beating them with extension cords on their backs and legs. Sentencing is set to take place at a later date and a life sentence in prison is the maximum penalty, currently at this time prosecutors are recommending 25 years. (Marfin, 2022).

 The article titled, “Interventions for Pedohebephilic Arousal in Men Convicted for Sexual Offenses Against Children: A Meta-Analytic Review” is written by McPhail and Oliver and describes the methods used to help cease the arousal on men charged with sex offenses against children. McPhail and Oliver found that through their study that the sexual abuse of children has wide-ranging adverse psychological, health, and financial impacts on victim and society (McPhail & Olver, 2020). For clinical assessments, both in the forensic and criminal justice contexts, there are structured assessment approaches for intervention of individuals convicted of sexual offenses against children. These approaches; clinical rating tools, diagnostic screens, and self-reporting measures; are used to mitigate future sexual victimization of others (McPhail & Olver, 2020). Standard phallometric testing has been found to be a strong predictor of sexual recidivism for those convicted of sexual offenses but many analyses have found that treatment programs that target arousal control are associated with decreases in sexual recidivism (McPhail & Olver, 2020)

 Along with treatment programs, behavioral intervention programs and reinforcement therapies have shown great success when dealing with sexual abuse perpetrators and victims of sex trafficking. Lastly, Medical intervention such as treatments with antiandrogen can medically reduce the sexual drive and feelings of those that are serial violators of sex and human trafficking laws (McPhail & Olver, 2020). Several departments’ head on treatment programs have founded and affirm the stance that most behavioral and pharmacological interventions were found to be associated with a reduction in pedohebephilic arousal and therefore decrease the sexual offenses of serial victimizers (McPhail & Olver, 2020)

Most trainings, seminars and classes on Human Trafficking Education that are offered are made available for either law enforcement or academic audiences and not geared towards the uneducated pubic. Though the events covered below indicated the need for additional education on trafficking it is a start in society’s progression on an educated society.

Sexually Exploited Children are exposed to trauma and are prone to early deaths. It is through Law Enforcement collaboration and training these children can receive help. The CSEC Training Module 1: Intro to Trafficking training sponsored by the TESS Program offer participants the opportunity to understand the differences between trafficking, exploitation and sex work, explore different contexts of sexual exploitation, identify youth at risk of CSEC, draw connections between risks and Pathways to Entry, understand the Stages of Exploitation: Luring, Recruiting, & Grooming, and to identify perpetrator control tactics & barriers for leaving (TESS Program, 2022).

 The article titled, “Predicting Adverse Childhood Experiences” is written by Baglivio, Wolff, Epps, and Nelson and describes how Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can lead to juvenile delinquency. ACEs can negatively impact a juvenile and with someone successfully trafficking or attempting to traffic a juvenile, that could lead to an ACE of trauma which may lead the juvenile down a path of delinquency which in turn can create a downward spiral into a life of crime or influence more juveniles to be susceptible to being victims of traffickers(Baglivio, Wolff, Epps, & Nelson, 2017).

 According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, there are 10 indicators for ACEs and they include emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, physical neglect, domestic violence toward the youth’s mother, household substance abuse, household mental illness, parental separation or divorce, and household member with a history of jail/ imprisonment (Baglivio, Wolff, Epps, & Nelson, 2017).

 When children experience adverse experiences such as trafficking, violence or threats of violence this may lead to an increase in self-reported total, violent and property crime. Studies have shown that children in a lower income family and experience a higher number of ACEs are more at risk for delinquency, family issues and to become victims of trafficking (Baglivio, Wolff, Epps, & Nelson, 2017). This is from traffickers preying on individuals with little to no ties to their community, or family as they are the individuals most likely not to be reported missing.

The article titled, “Risk Factors and Indicators for Commercial Sexual Exploitation/Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking of Adolescent Girls in the United States in the Context of School Nursing: An Integrative Review of the Literature.” is written by Jaeckl and Laughon and describes the risk factors associated with sex trafficking. Human Trafficking is sometimes seen as a crime against humanity but in the legal world, both nationally and internationally trafficking, specifically sex trafficking, is recognized at a human rights violation (Jaeckl & Laughon, 2021). From a Sex Trafficking perspective, the Polaris Project published the 2017 numbers for trafficking and of the 7,277 cases of Sex Trafficking, 2,764 or 38% involved a minor and 89% of those minor victims were female age 12-18 (Jaeckl & Laughon, 2021).

The nursing system has found that children who are victimized and forced into the sex trafficking arena are suffering at a high rate. Child victims have been seen to suffer from acute and chronic physical and mental health disorders, STIs such a HIV or Herpes, pregnancies, PTSD, and at the worst scenario suicide (Jaeckl & Laughon, 2021). All of these efforts to protect children especially from the hardships endured while being trafficked “many victims go unrecognized as unaided due to the inadequate healthcare provider education in victim identification and trauma-informed approaches, along with the lack of effective screening and response strategies and policies” (Jaeckl & Laughon, 2021).

The most targeted population are those that portray low self-esteem and ones that are easily manipulated (Department of Homeland Security, 2022).

The Intersection of Youth Homelessness + Human Trafficking program sponsored by National Youth Employment Coalition offers participants the opportunity to understand the pathways and vulnerabilities that lead to homelessness and trafficking, as well as key strategies to prevent both, federal definitions with examples that will be used to define homelessness and human trafficking- inclusive of sex and labor trafficking, viewing and conceptualizing the latest research to include Chapin Hall Voices of Youth Count and Loyola University’s research on the intersection of runaway and homeless youth and human trafficking, common risks and protective factors as well as key policy opportunities to move forward a proactive advocacy agenda (National Youth Employment Coalition, 2022).

The Human Trafficking and LGBTQ+: Risk Factors and Barriers to Care program sponsored by Georgia Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force offers participants the opportunity to share an interdisciplinary approach to gender and sexual identities as well as trauma-informed best practices to counteracting the effects of oppression on individuals, families, communities, and society as they relate to sexual and gender identities. Participants will also learn relevant statistics and case studies to shed light on risk factors and barriers to care (Georgia Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force, 2022).

The Boys Documentary Screening program sponsored by California Child Trafficking Program Support Unit offers participants the opportunity to view a screening of the BOYS Documentary. This screening is about men and boys throughout the United States who fall victim to human trafficking and are forced to sell their bodies for sex. While the movement of sex trafficking has brought significant awareness to female victims of trafficking, males have been starkly overlooked. BOYS' Documentary seeks to do just that - bring validity to the truth that males are victims of sex trafficking here in the United States. The documentary tells the narrative of male sex trafficking through the voices of four brave men and a collection of allies who stand with them in solidarity. BOYS documentary is a clear statement that absolutely boys and men are sex trafficked, and our humanity's response is to be the antidote to this crime by standing with survivors (CDSS, Child Trafficking Program Support Unit, 2022).

According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (1-888-3737-888) there is significant data to show trends of the worst states and cities for Human Trafficking cases. Figure 1 shows the number of cases reported by each state in 2019 and is further broken down into high-ranking states and cities for trafficking occurrences.

FIGURE 1:

*Figure 1*. A Graph About Calling a Hotline. Adapted from “*2019 U.S. NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE STATISTICS*” by Polaris, 2022. Retrieved from May 28, 2022, from https://polarisproject.org/2019-us-national-human-trafficking-hotline-statistics/.

It is imperative that the community that supports human trafficking awareness efforts increase, and the introduction of new fiscal incentives should be introduced to help increase the number of safe harbor places that victims to obtain services at. Tax deductions for safe harbor businesses and area hotels that assist and participate in national SOAP projects; bars of soap are the only required material for hotels to place in rooms and those that have the trafficking hotline of 1-888-3737-888 labeled on them help reduce trafficking numbers; should be introduced subsidized by either the hospitality industry or Internal Revenue Service.

The article titled, “Human Trafficking of Immigrants and Refugees in North Carolina.” is written by Nsonwu and describes the situation and dangers for immigrants and refugee for trafficking. Nsonwu takes the stance that Human Trafficking can and will be conducted in both legal and illegal business ventures and is backed up by the national reports that find over 50,000 victims are trafficked in the US every year (Nsonwu, 2019). One case study focused on was a female that originated in an African village and transported to the US and in this study, the victim was introduced to her victimizer by her own family and was trafficked through the use of fraud and deception (Nsonwu, 2019). Once in the US she was coerced by fear that her traffickers would report her illegal immigration status, confined to small areas, such as minimalistic hotel rooms and cargo containers, isolated from the outside world except other victims and physically and psychologically abused only after she was severely sick and taken to the hospital and a nurse recognized the signs of trafficking rescued her from her traffickers (Nsonwu, 2019).

If the nurse did not receive the education of recognizing trafficking this victim may never have been saved. Reports have shown repeatedly that both legal and illegal immigrants are at higher risk of being victimized by trafficker based on their unfamiliarity of the locations they are at.

Despite that Human Trafficking is the fastest growing crime, it is the most underreported crime because of the victims being too afraid of reporting (Nsonwu, 2019). The national data shows that Human trafficking has been increasing at 13% every year and that Latinos and Asians are the largest minority currently trafficked, however with more mandated training and educational programs to bring awareness and knowledge of Human Trafficking these numbers could start to decline as more people would be aware of the signs and methods traffickers use to recruit (Nsonwu, 2019). Nsonwu along with several other influential members in the healthcare industry has published a stance that “to address a victims’ needs, culture specific education and training for working with others should be required” (Nsonwu, 2019).

FIGURE 2:



*Figure 2*. A Map of the United States. Adapted from “*U.S. Human Trafficking Statistics & Laws by State*” by Neal Davis Law Firm, 2022. Retrieved from May 28, 2022, from https://www.nealdavislaw.com/criminal-defense-guides/human-trafficking-statistics.html#case.

The Top 10 states for Human Trafficking cases include California with 1,507 cases, Texas with 1,080 cases, Florida with 896 cases, New York with 454 cases, Ohio with 450 cases, Georgia with 417 cases, Michigan with 364 cases, Washington with 272 cases, Pennsylvania with 271 cases, and Illinois with 267 cases (Neal Davis Law Firm, 2022). The Top 10 cities for Human Trafficking cases include Washington DC with 401 cases, Atlanta with 317 cases, Orlando with 285 cases, Miami with 271 cases, Las Vegas with 237 cases, Sacramento with 222 cases, St Louis with 198 cases, Baton Rouge with 176 cases, Columbus with 170 cases and Richmond with 170 cases (Neal Davis Law Firm, 2022). These Areas are where educational programs are needed the most. To adapt to fiscal demands for new programs to be funded, regional contractors under the Department of Education or Department of State could be organized to assist States in the process of getting programs running.

In November 2020, after a five- day Federal Law Enforcement effort the U.S. Marshals report the successful recovery of 27 missing children. This event was called "Operation Find Our Children" and resulted in the rescue of 27 previously missing children and confirmed the location of six additional children that were missing. The U.S. Marshals Service, this year, has also recovered more than 440 kids in Georgia, Ohio, Indiana, Louisiana, and other states. Since 2005, the U.S. Marshals Service has recovered more than 2,000 missing children. Over the past five years, the agency has recovered missing children in 75% of the cases it has received. Of those recovered, 72% were recovered within seven days (NRV News, 2020).

Research had accurately reflected in the laws on the record for Human Trafficking and the various methods that are used by victimizers. Force used by traffickers can include physically restraining someone or exposing them to drug usage so that there is a need for continuous drug consumption. Fraud is used by lying about the intentions of the victimized such as about false employment opportunities, families or opportunities. Fraud can also take place in the form of complimenting potential victims. Coercion used by traffickers can include threats to families or animals to keep a victim under their control. Traffickers have even been known to kill another victim in the presence of other victims to coerce obedience (Department of Homeland Security, 2022).

In an incarcerated interview with a former trafficker, it was revealed that they would defraud or deceive potential victims by asking one simple question: ‘Has anyone ever told you that you have pretty eyes?’ (citation needed). Depending how the female responded would determine if they would be targeted for trafficking; if the female was confident or did not express an exuberant amount of interest in the compliment there was no further actions taken by the trafficker but if they showed a need for attention by acting excited and anxious for more compliments they would be further targeted (Department of Homeland Security, 2022).

The 'Combatting Human Trafficking: What determines what States do?' program sponsored by Centre for Access to Justice and Inclusion offers participants the opportunity to address important themes of equality, inclusion and access to justice, bringing together conversations from academia, legal professions, civil society and the third sector, in order to advance research informed policy making and reforms at local, national and international levels. Participants will also get a chance to speak with Dr. Jean-Pierre Gauci who is the Arthur Watts Senior Research Fellow in Public International Law and Director of Teaching and Training at British Institute of International and Comparative Law (Centre for Access to Justice and Inclusion, 2022).

Trafficking can occur in any place in the world and is not exclusive to real life, trafficking can and often occurs on social media or through internet-based sites such as social media sites like KIK, Plenty of Fish, and Backpage (Paxton, 2018) (Short, 2020).

FIGURE 3:

 *Figure 3*. Top 5 Graphs. Adapted from “*2019 U.S. NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE STATISTICS*” by Polaris, 2022. Retrieved from May 28, 2022, from https://polarisproject.org/2019-us-national-human-trafficking-hotline-statistics/.

The article titled, “HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND ONLINE PLATFORM LIABILITY.” is written by Moser and describes the dangers of social media in a Human Trafficking context. Moser in her study finds that Human Trafficking is the largest form of modern-day slavery at 700,000 people trafficked every year. With force, fraud and coercion being the methods traffickers utilize they have become master manipulators and target those that are the “weakest” such as those living in poverty, chronic unemployment, lack of education and runaways and homeless youth the most (Moser, 2021).

Human Trafficking is changing at a rapid pace including coming up with new ways to keep anonymous therefore it is imperative that policy is updated to help combat trafficking while the law catches up and educational programs are the best way. The two most recent legislative attempts to help stop trafficking through the use of internet is the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) and the Stop Enabling Sex Trafficking Act (SESTA) which provide banket immunity to internet providers which has backfired in the legal community and has had severe and catastrophic results in the effects of holding traffickers responsible (Moser, 2021).

The Internet is becoming the most dangerous way and method victims are brought into trafficking due to the cheap, anonymous, fast and non-traceable aspects of social media in general, through the internet traffickers can meet potential victims and never leave their home most of the time in other countries (Moser, 2021). The most successful ways to stop trafficking is through the use of education targeted at the most vulnerable groups such as teens and young adults. These two groups are the ones most using social media and the internet and because of their younger age are sharing details about their life that they may not mean to, an example could be “My parents are the worst” and “I just want someone to talk to”, these statements show others specifically traffickers there is contention in the home and that there is a vulnerability they could exploit which is what as a manipulator, traffickers do (Moser, 2021).

A study conducted by Dr. Vanesa Bouché has found several startling statistics including that 1 in 6 runaways are likely to become trafficked, 75% of those trafficked report being old online, and 45% reported to meet their traffickers in person while the other 55% report using some sort of social media platform (Moser, 2021). The reason why trafficking is so hard to catch online is that only 4% of law enforcement have a dedicated human trafficking taskforce and that is due to budgeting, lack of education on trafficking, and lack of personnel (Moser, 2021). The best way to stop trafficking from occurring is to educate the public in general, signs and flags showing suspicious behavior would be better caught by others and help could be rendered before victims are taken as opposed to after they are moved and the chances of their return decrease significantly.

In November 2020, a 31-year-old California man was sentenced to 120 months in prison Thursday, by U.S. District Judge Gregory Van Tatenhove, after previously being convicted by a federal jury of attempted online enticement of a minor to engage in sexual activity. According to testimony at trial, on February 20, 2019, Davidson contacted an individual, who self- identified as a 15-year-old female living in Franklin County, Kentucky, using the KIK messenger app. Under federal law, Davidson must serve 85 percent of his prison sentence and will be under the supervision of the U.S. Probation Office for 20 years, following his release. In addition to the prison sentence, Davidson was also ordered to pay $5,100 in special assessments (Rogers, 2020).

In May 2022, Jennie Taer wrote an article describing how victims are being lured into trafficking through social media. Dora Ortega’s Son was a regular 19-year-old who just wanted to make money. Her son along with several other younger teens had seen an ad on Snapchat for a human smuggling job. Homeland Security Investigations say that the drug cartels are behind the ads and several teens get roped into working for very high sums of money. At the current rate, the teens were being paid over $3,000 per trip made to smuggle illegal immigrants to Arizona. Another instance of teens falling prey to trafficking by victimizing others themselves is the bold social media ads that promise to pay hefty paychecks the same day to people who will smuggle people, this ad in particular told smugglers they could make between $2,500-$15,000. Between April 1- April 25, 2022, the Cochise County Sheriff Office has caught 97 people attempting to transport illegal aliens into the country (Taer, 2022).

Human Trafficking in a growing epidemic that can target anyone. It is imperative that a legislated educational program be offered to those most at risk. With a more educated public, traffickers will have a harder time victimizing so many people and the numbers of trafficking incidents will decrease as a result of the human trafficking processes being brought to light.

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