



Human Trafficking News Digest: November 31, 2016

Compiled by the [Center for Public Policy Studies](#)

San Francisco Chronicle

[Addiction Crisis Fuels Human Trafficking](#) (November 28): Traffickers have taken advantage of vulnerable populations across the state, even in rural areas like the Berkshires, Attorney General Maura Healey told The Eagle. And today, traffickers are using the desperation that accompanies addiction to their advantage, fueling a criminal enterprise that creates enormous profits from the exploitation of the vulnerable — primarily women. The use of drugs to compel women to engage in prostitution is expanding, authorities say, changing the way law enforcement looks at prostitution. Berkshire District Attorney David F. Capeless said prostitution used to be thought of as a voluntary criminal act. Capeless' office now approaches prostitution cases with the belief that the women involved are usually victims, he said. Donna Gavin, head of the Boston Police Department's Human Trafficking Unit, sees an explicit connection between drug addiction and exploitation, as drug addicts represent a vulnerable population — ideal victims for traffickers. With the high levels of opioid addiction in New England, drugs are being used as a way to recruit and control women in the sex trade, said Julie Dahlstrom, director of the Human Trafficking Clinic at Boston University Law School and a member of the state's former Human Trafficking Task Force. And once a victim becomes embedded in the “the life” of sexual exploitation, drug addiction can also develop out of the need to cope with the horror of one's daily life, said Steven L. Procopio, an independent consultant and expert on boys, men and trauma. The role drug addiction plays in human trafficking in Massachusetts comes amid an epidemic of abuse. Even as the state has increased efforts to reduce opioid overdoses and addiction, the death rate for unintentional and undetermined opioid-related deaths hit a 16-year high in 2015.

The Missourian

[With New Enforcement Regulations for Child Trafficking in Place, Task Force Considers Additional Measures](#) (November 28): When Rick Walter logs onto Craigslist, he's not just looking for cheap housing or a missed connection. Instead, the Scott County sheriff is investigating for telltale signs that a user may be trafficking underage children. If Walter catches a trafficker, they can now be charged with a felony thanks to House Bill 1562. The bill, which became law Aug. 28, expands Missouri's definition of human trafficking to include “advertising the availability” of a child for sex acts. Previously, trafficking itself was a felony crime in the state, but advertising was not. Aggravated stalking of a minor who is “alleged to be the victim of an offense” is also now a felony thanks to the bill. This is the second time Rep. Elijah Haahr, R-Springfield, filed this bill, after an unsuccessful attempt in 2015. Haahr, who serves as chairman of the Human Trafficking Task Force, said he was inspired to pass HB1562 after studying legislation other states, such as Oklahoma, had passed to combat human trafficking. This law marks the latest in a series of efforts the Human Trafficking Task Force has undertaken to crack down on the issue in state — and it's not done cracking down yet. At its latest meeting on Nov. 15, the task force analyzed different bills its members could pitch to the General Assembly in the new year. These included training for law enforcement officers, tougher penalties on traffickers and decriminalization of prostitution.



Human Trafficking News Digest: November 31, 2016

Compiled by the [Center for Public Policy Studies](#)

Kansas Public Radio

[Kansas Improving in Fight Against Human Trafficking](#) (November 22): Kansas has been given a grade of “B” for legislative laws regarding the sex trafficking of minors. The grade has risen over the past several years. In 2011, Kansas had a score of “F” from Shared Hope, an international victim advocacy group. The group monitors all 50 states on laws that help to prevent child sex trafficking and punish offenders. Kansas’ higher score marks the fifth year in a row of improvements, and state Attorney General Derek Schmidt said in a news release this week that human trafficking has been a priority. He cites a new law crafted in 2013 that resulted in more effective prosecution, additional training and better support for victims. Schmidt said the report also notes areas where Kansas can improve. He says the state could do more to recognize that victims of sex trafficking are victims, even if they’ve taken part in criminal activity. He says he’ll propose legislation next year that could help further improve the state’s response to human trafficking.

Cleveland Municipal Court

[First to Graduate from Human Trafficking Docket](#) (November 16): After two years of operation, The Cleveland Municipal Court Human Trafficking Docket is staging its first graduation, which will be held from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Thursday, November 17, 2016 at Massimo da Milano’s Restaurant, located at 430 West 25th Street in Cleveland. The first and only graduate is Amanda Britton, a survivor of date rape, drugs, homelessness and prostitution. The two year program, under the direction of Judge Marilyn B. Cassidy is voluntary and involves judicial supervision and access to treatment and recovery support services designed to improve the lives of the participants and the welfare of the community. Judge Cassidy, emphasizing the importance of having a specialized docket, where possible victims are screened and referred to her treatment team which includes trauma counseling, recovery housing and help with possible substance abuse. Law enforcement is also involved to aid in tracking down the traffickers themselves. At any given time, there are about 25-30 victims in the program and there are plenty of hurdles to jump over in order to be successful like Amanda. Many victims of human trafficking are young, suffer from a disability, they are dependent on drugs or all of the above. Seventy-five percent of human trafficking cases involve females with many just 12-13 years of age.

Des Moines Register

[Des Moines Identified as Top 100 Human Trafficking Site](#) (November 16): Des Moines has been identified by a national anti-human trafficking organization as one of the country’s top 100 sites for suspected massage-related trafficking. Washington, D.C.-based Polaris began a national initiative in January to crack down on illicit massage businesses, including six raided last month in Indianapolis. Polaris identified Des Moines in the top 100 locales by scraping data from paid online sites, where customers review sex workers. It found eight locations in the city, according to Rochelle Keyhan, who is directing the national effort. “We found 45 (locations) in Iowa and



Human Trafficking News Digest: November 31, 2016

Compiled by the [Center for Public Policy Studies](#)

eight in Des Moines,” she said. “Those are conservative estimates. Law enforcement typically identifies 150 to 200 percent more than our initial numbers.” Keyhan said many massage workers trafficked in the U.S. originally come from China or Korea, and are shipped across the country from entry points on the coasts, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York. Polaris is working with law enforcement and government officials to help them recognize that traffickers often blend in next door to legitimate businesses. According to research at Rutgers University, the exotic massage industry in the U.S. could be doing as much as \$1 billion in business a year. Yet Iowa’s U.S. attorney offices in Des Moines or Davenport have not prosecuted a human trafficking case tied to massage parlors, a spokeswoman confirmed.

Houston Public Media

[State Sen. Sylvia Garcia Wants Texas Truck Drivers to Help Combat Human Trafficking](#) (September 15): This week is the first one when members of the Texas Legislature can introduce legislation for the new session and State Sen. Sylvia Garcia has introduced a bill to require that applicants for commercial driver licenses take a course on identifying and reporting human trafficking. Garcia thinks teaching these professionals about this type of crime would be productive because “we have almost 200,000 truck drivers in the state of Texas that can be our eyes and ears on the road and in places like motels and truck stops and restaurants, where victims are being exploited every day.” If her bill becomes law, not only new applicants for a commercial license would have to take it, but also truck drivers that would be renewing their licenses. The Texas Trucking Association is in favor of the bill introduced by Garcia, who is confident it can gather bipartisan support in Austin.

Los Angeles Times

[Don't Make Human Trafficking Our New War on Drugs](#) (November 3): In the last two years, Los Angeles County supervisors have taken important steps forward in serving two particular populations. One is former inmates. The supervisors are providing them meaningful opportunities to reenter society successfully after jail or prison, with a shot at housing, healthcare, medical and mental health treatment, employment and other services intended to keep them from living on the street or falling back into the cycle of offending and imprisonment. The county’s reentry programs are very much works in progress, but they have begun to move from the drawing board to reality. In so doing, they provide hope to those in need, encouragement to nonprofits that have done this work for decades with little support or acknowledgment, and a model for other local governments that are likewise trying to smooth the path for former offenders’ safe and successful return to society. The county’s reentry programs are very much works in progress, but they have begun to move from the drawing board to reality. In so doing, they provide hope to those in need, encouragement to nonprofits that have done this work for decades with little support or acknowledgment, and a model for other local governments that are likewise trying to smooth the path for former offenders’ safe and successful return to society. The second is minors caught up in sex work. Girls and boys under 18 who sell themselves for sex have for too long been treated as criminals



Human Trafficking News Digest: November 31, 2016

Compiled by the [Center for Public Policy Studies](#)

— arrested and punished the same as if they were adults — while those who traffic them too often escape justice altogether. Sheriff Jim McDonnell and the Board of Supervisors, led by Don Knabe, have embraced a movement that treats juveniles in the sex trade as trafficking victims rather than criminal prostitutes, while focusing enforcement efforts on those who profit from the heartless abuse of children. The second is minors caught up in sex work. Girls and boys under 18 who sell themselves for sex have for too long been treated as criminals — arrested and punished the same as if they were adults — while those who traffic them too often escape justice altogether. Sheriff Jim McDonnell and the Board of Supervisors, led by Don Knabe, have embraced a movement that treats juveniles in the sex trade as trafficking victims rather than criminal prostitutes, while focusing enforcement efforts on those who profit from the heartless abuse of children. The second is minors caught up in sex work. Girls and boys under 18 who sell themselves for sex have for too long been treated as criminals — arrested and punished the same as if they were adults — while those who traffic them too often escape justice altogether. Sheriff Jim McDonnell and the Board of Supervisors, led by Don Knabe, have embraced a movement that treats juveniles in the sex trade as trafficking victims rather than criminal prostitutes, while focusing enforcement efforts on those who profit from the heartless abuse of children.

San Francisco Chronicle

[SF Report Uncovers Nearly 500 Cases of Human Trafficking](#) (November 2): There were almost 500 cases of human trafficking reported in San Francisco last year, according to a first-of-its-kind report recently released by a task force commissioned by Mayor Ed Lee. The report, updated Monday by the Mayor's Task Force on Anti-Human Trafficking — commissioned in March 2013 to improve the city's handling of the ongoing issue — counted 499 victims of human trafficking identified by 15 government and community agencies throughout the city in 2015. Trafficking in persons is one of the most significant human rights issues of the 21st century," the authors of the report wrote, adding that California ranks with New York, Texas and Oklahoma as among the states with the most human trafficking in the country. Of the almost 500 victims, 122 were minors, almost all of whom were victims of commercial sex exploitation. A number of recommendations were made by the task force in the report, including establishing city-wide screenings for victims of human trafficking and paying more attention and devoting more resources to labor trafficking, which could be an under-reported problem. There were just 65 cases of labor trafficking — in which a person is held against their will and forced to work — reported. In September, four men escaped an illegal marijuana farm in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas, where they said they were beaten and forced to work at gunpoint for months.

Michigan Public Radio

[Michigan Non-Profits Looking to Google to Fight Human Trafficking](#) (November 2): Michigan non-profits are looking into an innovative way of fighting human trafficking. The idea is to take advantage of free advertising on Google. Google offers ten thousand dollars in free ads to non-profit organizations. The Michigan Human Traf-



Human Trafficking News Digest: November 31, 2016

Compiled by the [Center for Public Policy Studies](#)

ficking Commission and a state police task force are working on gathering as many non-profits as possible to apply for the advertising with one goal in mind: Deter people who search for paid sex from following through. The non-profits would use their advertisement allowance for anti-trafficking ads that would pop up when someone uses certain key words. Kathy Maitland is a member of the committee and the task force. She said some people, like those with sex addictions, might not realize the harm they are causing. Maitland says the idea behind the project is to work on whittling down the demand for paid for sex, which is a core cause of human trafficking. She says for some people, just realizing the ramifications of using escort services and paying for sex can be a deterrent.

New York Times

[7 Men Accused in Sex-Trafficking Ring in U.S. and Mexico](#) (November 1): Seven men have been indicted on sex trafficking charges in what federal officials said on Tuesday was an international organization that exploited adult and underage women for more than a decade in Mexico and the United States. All seven could face life sentences in federal court in New York on charges of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking. In a statement announcing the arrests, federal authorities enumerated the often brutal methods of the organization, which they described as a family business that has been operating since at least 2000. The operation would start in Mexico, where traffickers worked to isolate victims from their families and subjected them to physical and sexual abuse. Often kept in locked apartments, their communication monitored, the women would be forced into prostitution to help traffickers repay a debt, the authorities said.