



Fall 2017

New Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking (a/k/a Modern Day Slavery)

Slavery was supposed to end with President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, but there are thousands, and perhaps millions, of people enslaved right here and right now in the United States.

Human trafficking is the commercial exchange and exploitation of humans, including forced prostitution and pornography, involuntary labor, servitude and debt bondage. More people are living in slavery today throughout the world – more than 29 million people – than ever before in history.

Human traffickers train and groom their victims not to talk to law enforcement officers. The traffickers rule by fear and intimidation, from physical violence to threats of deportation for those in the country illegally.

When many people hear of human trafficking, they think the problem is mostly the sex and labor trade of undocumented immigrant women from faraway places. In reality, however, many victims of human trafficking are local runaways and other American citizens who are lured into an underworld with false promises of a high-paying job, a better life, or true love. More than 40 percent of sex trafficking cases and 20 percent of labor trafficking cases involve U.S. citizens as victims.

Our children are most vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking, as the U.S. Department of Justice warns that "as many as 300,000 children are at risk" for sexual exploitation each year in the United States.

Victims of human trafficking are often reluctant to speak up, so our office has become more aggressive in rooting out this evil. We now have a dedicated human trafficking prosecutor who works closely with PBSO detectives and federal agents on a full-time task force located in Palm Beach Gardens that has dramatically increased the number of human trafficking arrests and prosecutions. Our success here in Palm Beach County prompted the Florida Attorney General to appoint State Attorney Aronberg to represent all prosecutors on a statewide task force on the subject.

For more information, or if you suspect that someone is being trafficked or exploited, please contact the appropriate agency:

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC): 1-800-THE-LOST

Florida Abuse Hotline: 1-800-96-ABUSE

Human Trafficking Coalition of the Palm Beaches: www.htcpb.org

Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking: www.stophumantrafficking.org

National Human Trafficking Resource Center: 1-888-373-7888

Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office: 1-561-688-3000 or HumanTrafficking@pbso.org