



**ARIZONA HUMAN TRAFFICKING COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

February 21, 2018
9:00 AM

Governor's 2nd Floor Conference Room
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Notice having been duly given, a meeting of the Arizona Human Trafficking Council (Council) convened on **February 21, 2018**, at 9:05 AM in the 2nd Floor Conference Room, 1700 West Washington, Phoenix, Arizona 85007. Attendance of Council members was as follows:

Members Present

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|-------------------------------|--|
| Gil Orrantia (Co-Chairperson) | Brian Steele |
| Allie Bones | Jim Waring |
| Cara Christ | Kathryn Blades (representing Greg McKay) |
| Joseph Kelroy | William Beck (representing Frank Milstead) |
| Zora Manjencich | Maria Fuentes |
| Gary McCarthy | |
| Sheila Polk (phone) | |
| Dominique Roe-Sepowitz | |

Members Absent

Cindy McCain (Co-Chairperson)
Nathaniel Brown
Heather Carter
Doug Coleman
Tanya Cordor
Michael Cowan
Debbie Johnson

Staff and Guests Present

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| Malcolm Hightower | Kelsey Teske |
| Nikki Green | Joanna Jauregui |
| Sam Burba | |

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Gil Orrantia called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Orrantia welcomed those in attendance and asked members to briefly introduce themselves.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (ACTION)

The December 13, 2017 meeting minutes were reviewed. Mr. Orrantia motioned to approve the minutes as drafted, Mr. Joseph Kelroy seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

4. STOP ENABLING SEX TRAFFICKERS ACT UPDATE

Mr. Andy Polesovsky, Senior Counsel of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, presents the council with an overview and history in the role backpage.com has played in the facilitation of online child sex trafficking. Numerous attempts have been made through litigation to hold backpage.com CEO and owners accountable for their role in the online trafficking of minors unsuccessfully due to protection from article 230 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA). The intent of Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA) is to block immunity of websites who facilitate online sex trafficking of minors. Furthermore, SESTA seeks to hold these entities accountable without impairing free internet.

Mr. Brian Steele asked which role law enforcement can help with "knowing clause", in determining primary motive for backpage.com or other providers, by crafting language

Mr. Polesovsky stated that everyone in the community knew what backpage.com is used for, yet it took senate two years to collect evidence knowing that use of CDA immunity kills civil lawsuits. Current law and immunity is so strong, cases are dismissed. Engaging with organizations like NCMEC (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children) helps make cases more knowledgeable in both criminal and civil suit.

Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz asked what impact the successful settlement case of Erik Bauer in Seattle may have on SESTA.

Mr. Polesovsky stated that it is the only successful case by a civil litigant, but no court ruling or opinion was established and that the settlement does not change the landscape or the need to change the law.

Mr. Orrantia commends Mr. Polesovsky and team on their success.

5. VICTIM STATEMENT

Ms. Yvonne Ambrose, a human trafficking advocate, began her work after the murder of her daughter, Ms. Desiree Robinson, in 2016. Ms. Ambrose shares that her daughter was purchased by a man searching for underage sex on backpage.com, and found the post of her daughter, made by her trafficker. Ms. Ambrose stated that the murder of her daughter would not have been possible if backpage.com was not in the business of selling children.

Ms. Ambrose stated that according to the 2017 U.S. Senate Report on backpage.com, the moderation process utilized by backpage.com altered ads prior to publishing by removing words, phrases and images indicative of an illegal transaction. backpage.com first used a human moderator than used a computer based filter to remove words such as "amber alert", "little girl", "teen", "fresh", "innocent", and "school girl", yet did not delete the ads for illegal content. Ms. Ambrose stated that 2/3 of children sold for sex are trafficked online and the majority of survivors report being sold on backpage.com.

Mr. Antonio Romanucci, Ms. Ambrose's attorney, states that what is needed to combat human trafficking is a full frontal assault in which awareness, education and regulation are required, as litigation alone is not the answer.

There were no questions from the Council.

6. 2017 HOMELESS YOUTH EXPERIENCES STUDY

Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz and Ms. Melissa Brockie present to the council a summary of the 2017 Youth Experiences Survey (YES) which was funded by the McCain Institute, the City of Tucson, Our Family Services and UMOM. Research was collected in collaboration with Our Family Services in Tucson, Native American Connected, one-n-ten and UMOM. This is the fourth year in which the study was conducted, with the first inclusion of questions regarding labor trafficking. This study is based on the responses from 187 participants, collected by a 6 page survey, of which all received responses were completed. Participants were between the ages of 18-25 and were in transitional housing, drop-in centers, or on the streets of Phoenix and Tucson. The purpose of this survey is to provide insight to service providers and community members about the challenges and needs of Arizona's homeless young adults.

Dr. Roe-Sepowitz notes that an interesting finding of this study was that 52.4% of participants were raised in Arizona, with the remaining participants being from 26 other states and four other countries. It is unknown whether these participants are refugees or unaccompanied minors, but it points out the lack of social support they may experience. The study also found that 31% of respondents identified as being victims of sex trafficking, and found that sex in exchange for a place to stay or food had increased since previous years. Dr. Roe-Sepowitz states that as a community, exchanging sex for food is intolerable. As in previous years, the study revealed that LGBTQ youth were at higher risk, and that this issue continues to grow over time, the reasons for which remain to be determined.

Ms. Brockie stated that statistics of labor trafficking do not differ compared to sex trafficking. Victims of labor trafficking share common life experiences with victims of sex trafficking. Ms. Brockie further pointed out that adverse experiences associated with sex trafficking continue to rise from previous years, including victimization of LGBTQ persons, reported suicide attempts, more than one mental health diagnosis, diagnoses of depression, anxiety, etc.

Implications of the study show a need for the provision of services to homeless youth through the collaboration of organizations, in which there is no service overlap. A larger network is required to address the needs of homeless youth, as these individuals have a desire to be connected to services, entities and people. Ms. Brockie states the need for more funding for victim service providers including transitional housing. A need also exists within the community response, including educational and medical. Consistent standards must be developed among service providers and best practices established for identifying victims, referral services and prevention. Current funding does not provide capacity for preventative services.

Ms. Allie Bones asked whether mandatory reporting impacts the willingness of youth to seek help from adults.

Dr. Roe-Sepowitz stated that in Hawaii it is a felony for any social service provider to not report. Mandatory reporting is a double-edged sword in which Department of Child Safety determines what is acceptable or not, which results in reporting fatigue for criteria not being met. Broader research must be conducted on barriers to asking for help.

Ms. Brockie stated that she has had an experience with screening a 17 year old, in which that individual threw papers in her face. When that individual turned 18, they were ready to talk, showing they understand the consequences of disclosure. Disclosure is empowering, and the investment of a victim's advocate within VICE has been significant, as it is someone associated with police, but who is on your side.

Mr. Brian Steele asked where a gap exists between youth meeting providers for access to medical service or food and which committee could be tasked with the food issue.

Ms. Brockie stated that individuals do not want to be part of the systems, and reconnection after 18 is difficult. A streamlined system for mental health between young adults and adults is needed. Youth and those under 18

have access to three meals a day, the provider capacity does not exist to provide the same to adults based on city requirements or kitchens not being up to code. We can only serve things kids can make but cannot provide meals.

Mr. Brian Steele asked if the YES study revealed whether or not a market for sex trafficking existed in Arizona because Arizona is soft on prosecution.

Ms. Brockie stated that networks are powerful, that there may be some word that may be a factor, but the reality is youth have been trafficked through a network and have ended up or are left here.

7. LABOR TRAFFICKING REPORT

Dr. Roe-Sepowitz, Ms. Kristen Bracy, and Mr. Bandak Lul presented the Arizona State University Sex Trafficking Intervention Research Office's report, A Four-Year Analysis of Labor Trafficking Cases in The United States. Dr. Roe-Sepowitz states that the same methodology was used as in the sex trafficking analysis, in which data was collected through an online search. Cases used within this report were those that had found a resolution, as a result, Arizona specific information was not available. Ms. Bracey, the Associate Director of the STIR office, states that this report is the first of its kind in providing a scope of labor trafficking nationwide.

The report was first established on federal and legal definitions associated with labor trafficking and as defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. The purpose of the report was to determine reliable statistics on the prevalence, frequency, geography, and particulars of labor trafficking. The report identified 125 persons arrested for trafficking of migrant workers and U.S. citizens and 120 victims of labor trafficking between 2013 and 2016. The report also found that cases of labor trafficking steadily increased over the four years, with an increase in immigrant labor traffickers, an increase in labor traffickers involved in visa fraud and in increase in traffickers involved in withholding of victims passport or visa. The increased number of cases could be the result of increased awareness and training within communities, or the increased use of labor trafficking language used by prosecutors and the media.

Implications of the study include a need to learn more about the role of foreign national individuals in the recruitment and labor trafficking of migrant workers, and labor exploitation experience, in order to have a better understanding of evolving labor trafficking trends. Future research should also be focused on areas of the country with few or zero labor trafficking arrests as well as within hospitality, agriculture, and home health care agency industries.

Recommendations from this study are understating potential points of intervention for labor trafficking victims. Ms. Bracey stated the need for standard protocol for public transportation professions, providing education and awareness for vulnerable populations that include awareness of labor rights and providing a space to discuss labor disputes with an audience capable of helping them.

Dr. Roe-Sepowitz stated that a report is still pending regarding the involvement of backpage.com and labor trafficking.

There were no questions from the Council.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Orrantia forgoed committee reports due to time constraints.

Outreach and Awareness Committee

Policy Committee

Training Committee

Victim Services Committee

9. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Ms. Angie Bayless, CEASE, discusses the issue of supply and demand by sharing a one day-snapshot of ads on backpage.com in which 550 people were advertising, which is almost double the number of prostituted people. Ms. Bayless notes that she has never taken a snapshot in January and questions which role weather plays in both supply and demand.

Mr. Jeff Gibbs discusses the education program launched for health care practitioners in assessing and treating victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. The educational program has since been hosted at conferences for practitioners, including one held by the Phoenix Catholic Diocese, which included the attendance of 75 physicians. The program has been approved for Continuing Medical Education (CME) accreditation and will be available at conferences in April and November, which are expected to have 250 to 300 physicians in attendance.

10. ADJOURN

There being no further business before the Council, Mr. Orrantia motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gary McCarthy moved to adjourn the meeting, Dr. Roe-Sepowitz seconded. Meeting adjourned at 10:57 AM.