



Human Trafficking Update

May 2018

EDITORIAL

The Importance of FOSTA-SESTA

Last month, I attended the annual global summit of the Coalition to End Sexual Exploitation. This four-day event brought together 600 people from 18 countries, all committed to eradicating sexual violence and exploitation in all its forms.

The attendees were varied, and their organizations saw different pathways to reaching their shared goal. Yet with one voice, they celebrated one essential achievement: the passage of FOSTA-SESTA.

FOSTA-SESTA is a package of bills that passed Congress earlier in the year and was signed into law by the president on April 11, 2018. FOSTA stands for Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act. SESTA stands for Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act. Together,

they stand for a law that gives federal and state law enforcement more authority to pursue online sites that host sex trafficking ads, and bring them to justice.

The law was signed just days after federal and state authorities seized Backpage.com on charges of facilitating sex trafficking, and arrested seven individuals. The 93-count indictment includes allegations that the site facilitated prostitution and laundered tens of millions of dollars in profits. Several young people – girls, mostly – died as a result of being trafficked through the site.

In a matter of hours, dozens Websites around the Internet began shutting down in whole or in part. Online sex-related

advertising declined 87 percent as a result of the bill's passage in the House.

The law is not without its critics. Civil liberties groups argue that the law's interpretation of unlawful Websites is overly broad. Prostituted people have said that it will weaken their ability to research potential johns and put their safety at risk.

But as I consider those arguments, I recall the stories I have heard from survivors. The women who, as young girls, were lured with the promise of love or friendship, to be abused, raped and trafficked to strangers. The men who, as young boys, were abused by family members, which made them vulnerable to traffickers and teens and adults.

The young people who, after running away from abusive families, were simply looking for a safe place to stay, only to be exploited by people much worse.

As a communicator, I am among the first to stand up for the freedom of speech. But, as I learned from my social studies teacher in 8th grade, your rights extend only as far as your fist ends, and another person's face begins. The stories of survivors matter. Their plea to end the violence, and to keep other people from such exploitation, must be heard.

The global summit was emotionally exhausting. Hour after hour, I listened to lectures from experts, statistics from researchers, and stories from survivors. It wears you down. Then it steels you in your commitment. You stand ready with others – of all faiths, background, geographies, and perspectives – to fight this kind of evil and violence.

It's possible that FOSTA-SESTA isn't perfect. Few laws are, when they are first passed. That's what amendments are for. The perfect should never be the enemy of the good. We stop the bleeding – literal and figurative – now. We build based on what we learn.

Read more about FOSTA-SESTA's passage into law: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/true-crime/wp/2018/04/11/trump-signs-fosta-bill-targeting-online-sex-trafficking-enables-states-and-victims-to-pursue-websites/?utm_term=.9ccc8abbcef8

National Human Trafficking

Hotline

1-888-3737-888

Read more about the charges against Backpage.com here: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2018/04/09/backpage-indictment-unsealed/501214002/>

Read how two survivors respond to critics of FOSTA/SESTA: <https://medium.com/world-without-exploitation/rolling-stone-article-evokes-response-from-two-exited-survivors-cobe88e1f8a7>

Hacking for Justice at GMU

Hackers and technology experts gathered for a 36-hour hackathon at George Mason University last month to create new apps and technology to thwart sex trafficking and exploitation.

Several innovative ideas came from the weekend including:

- A tool to map high trafficking routes.
- An application of block chain that would enable federal and local enforcement to pool data and find trafficking victims.
- A facial recognition app that can connect with security cameras in hotels to identify people being trafficked.

Organizers are now considering repeating the event to engender more innovative approaches.

Read more here: <https://wtop.com/fairfax-county/2018/04/va-hackathon-participants-create-tools-combat-human-trafficking/>

U.S. May Sanction Pakistan for Human Trafficking

For several years, the United States has had the authority to impose sanctions on the country scoring the lowest grade on human trafficking rights. This year, the Administration may use that authority.

Pakistan is historically among the worst global offenders in human trafficking. A new State Department report on the issue is due in June. The Administration is warning Pakistan that it could lose civilian aid worth tens of millions of dollars if that report finds Pakistan has not done enough to combat human trafficking.

Pakistan has been on the report's Tier 2 "Watch List" for four years, the limit a country can remain at the second-to-worst ranking. Unless it is upgraded, Pakistan will drop to Tier 3, the lowest rung, alongside Iran, North Korea and Syria, among others.

Pakistani officials dismissed the impact of a loss of U.S. civilian aid. The country's economy is nearly \$300 billion and growing.

Read more here: <https://news.trust.org/item/20180412100030-j5h3s/>

International Sting Frees Hundreds of Survivors

Law enforcement across the Caribbean and South America has freed nearly 350 people from human trafficking networks and led to the arrests of 22 people, according to Interpol.

Those rescued included children and adults trafficked for sex or labor in nightclubs, gold mines, factories, open-air markets and on farms.

About 500 police were engaged in raids that occurred in Brazil, Venezuela, Jamaica and 10 other countries. The operation was coordinated by Barbados and funded by Canada, as part of France-based Interpol's global efforts to fight human trafficking.

Interpol said that social services and charity groups are working to support the victims.

Read more here: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/police-free-human-trafficking-victims-across-the-caribbean/2018/04/30/0ea09f64-4c67-11e8-85c1-9326c4511033_story.html?utm_term=.1dd9ba8a3593

Attend a Night To End Trafficking

Airline Ambassadors International and Just Ask Prevention Project are hosting an evening of mingling and merriment, but with a mission: **to raise funds for the tools and resources needed in the fight against Human Trafficking.**

Join Bill Woolf & Jodi O'Hern of Just Ask, and Nancy Rivard & Kavita Nanavati of Airline Ambassadors International, who have been leading the fight to educate and advocate for human trafficking awareness in the local communities and aviation community around the world.

DATE: Fri, June 8, 2018
TIME: 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM EDT
PLACE: Hilton Springfield, 6550 Loisdale Road, Springfield, VA 22150

Tickets are \$40 for adults, \$25 for students.

The evening's entertainment will include:

- Live music performed by Downland
- A silent auction for items including two round trip tickets to Hawaii, an aerial tour of a scenic area within 150 miles outside the Washington D.C. area, and many more items
- A raffle for other great prizes and gifts including 50/50 cash raffle
- Hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar
- Photo opportunities with Mrs. District of Columbia USA Ambassador 2018

Learn more and purchase tickets here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-night-to-help-end-trafficking-tickets-45503757965?aff=ehomecard>



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*A regular newsletter
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*Human Trafficking Task
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*Submit story ideas to
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Want to Learn More About the Dangers of Sexual Exploitation?

Here are just a few of the groups I learned about while at the global summit of the Coalition to End Sexual Exploitation:

National Center on Sexual Exploitation: exposing the links between all the forms of sexual exploitation such as child sexual abuse, prostitution, sex trafficking and the public health crisis of pornography:

<https://endsexualexploitation.org/about/>

Prostitution Research and Education: conducting research on prostitution, pornography and trafficking and offers education and consultation to researchers, survivors, the public and policymakers:

<http://prostitutionresearch.com/about/mission/>

Stop Trafficking Demand: Focused on the links between pornography, sexually oriented businesses, strip clubs, prostitution and sex trafficking.

www.stoptraffickingdemand.com

World Without Exploitation: Working to create a world where no person is bought, sold or exploited:

<https://www.worldwithoutexploitation.org/about>

