

Protecting Ohio's Families



Ohio Attorney General's Office
Human Trafficking



2012 - 2013

Local Law Enforcement
Human Trafficking Statistics



MIKE DEWINE
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

OHIO HUMAN TRAFFICKING
COMMISSION



MIKE DEWINE

★ OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL ★

June 27, 2013

Dear Fellow Ohioans:

Exactly one year ago today, House Bill 262, the Safe Harbor Law, was signed into law to combat human trafficking in Ohio. The Safe Harbor Law increases penalties for traffickers who prey on our most vulnerable citizens and helps heal the victims of this heinous crime.

In addition, the Safe Harbor Act requires local law enforcement to collect information on human trafficking cases and forward this data to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI). BCI is then required to release the data in the form of an annual report. My office sent a letter to local law enforcement in July of 2012 to inform them of their duty to report human trafficking investigations, and I sent a follow up reminder to local law enforcement in April of this year. Eleven law enforcement agencies submitted information identifying human trafficking investigations. All of the human trafficking data forwarded to BCI by these law enforcement agencies since H.B. 262 was passed last year is compiled in this report.

Viewing victims of human trafficking as victims in need of services rather than prostitutes deserving of jail time represents a major paradigm shift for law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and the public. Though awareness of this crime is increasing, there is little doubt that the number of human trafficking victims, offenders, and cases contained in this report are under-reported. This under-reporting is for several possible reasons.

First, many of the cases that are currently being prosecuted as promoting prostitution or compelling prostitution are, in actuality, human trafficking cases. Since the Safe Harbor Law passed, there have been 92 arrests for promoting prostitution and 33 arrests for compelling prostitution. With additional training on the new human trafficking statute, prosecutors and judges will likely become more comfortable using the new human trafficking statute rather than charging the traffickers with promoting or compelling prostitution.

Second, the section of the Safe Harbor Law that requires this data to be collected potentially conflicts with state and federal confidentiality laws that apply to the human trafficking task forces in Ohio. These numbers do not contain all of the investigations that were conducted by local law enforcement that were eventually prosecuted at the federal level. Many of the cases initially identified and investigated by the Toledo Police Department were handed over to the FBI's federal human trafficking task force, the Northwest Ohio Violent Crimes Against Children Task Force in Toledo. These numbers are not included.

In addition, the data do not include any identifying information for investigations currently underway for the local law enforcement agencies that form the Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force run by my office. Ohio Revised Code section 177.02(F) prohibits any agency that is part of a task force under the Organized Crime Investigations Commission from disclosing ongoing investigations prior to an indictment being returned or criminal action being initiated in court. Thus, though we have included the total number of

investigations being pursued by the Task Force - no victim, offender, or buyer information about ongoing investigations from the Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force agencies was included.

Ohio has made great strides in its human trafficking efforts. Through the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA), my office trains law enforcement using on-line training sessions, as well as basic and advanced in-person human trafficking training. Since H.B. 262 passed last summer, more than 35,000 on-line courses have been completed by law enforcement.

Additionally, there has been an increase in the number of anti-trafficking coalitions to coordinate services for human trafficking victims across the state, covering parts of Eastern Ohio that had no concerted human trafficking efforts previously. Many state agencies, through the Governor's Human Trafficking Task Force, have increased their efforts to combat this problem, including training foster parents on human trafficking, creating model healthcare protocols to address human trafficking, and establishing the nation's first Statewide Anti-Trafficking Coordinator. My office announced the Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force, which is a trafficking-specific task force in Ohio that combines law enforcement and victim services professionals to help rescue victims and prosecute traffickers.

After this initial report, I will release the human trafficking statistics for each calendar year in January. Between now and then, my office will continue to investigate human trafficking cases through our Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force, push legislation and other initiatives through my Human Trafficking Commission, and work to train law enforcement on how to best identify and prosecute traffickers.

Very respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike DeWine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Mike" and "DeWine" being capitalized and prominent.

Mike DeWine
Ohio Attorney General

Investigations and Prosecutions

The Safe Harbor Law requires the collection of data on the number of overall investigations and prosecutions of the Trafficking in Persons statute, which serves as the state's human trafficking law. Over the past year, local law enforcement have reported 30 total Trafficking in Persons investigations, and 21 traffickers. Some of these investigations are ongoing, and thus law enforcement submitted the number of investigations, but no identifying information from the investigations.

These investigative efforts have resulted in 15 arrests and 17 prosecutions. To date, seven prosecutions have resulted in convictions. It is important to note this number does not include any of the investigations conducted by the federal human trafficking task force in Toledo.

Victim Information

Local law enforcement reported the demographic information on human trafficking victims, offenders, and purchasers. All of the victims reported by local law enforcement were domestic sex trafficking cases.

Local law enforcement identified 38 sex trafficking victims over the past year. Ethnicity data reveals that of these victims, 27 were identified as White, nine were identified as Black, and two victims' ethnicities were unknown. There were no reported Asian/Pacific Islander or American Indian/Native Alaskan victims. All of the victims appear to be United States citizens, as there were no foreign victims reported.

The youngest reported age group was 16 or 17 years old, and the oldest reported victims being were 30-40 years old. Most of the victims were between 18 and 29 years old. The ages of the human trafficking victims were reported as the following:

- 16-17 years old: 1
- 18-20 years old: 15
- 21-29 years old: 19
- 30-40 years old 3

One reported victim was male, the rest of the victims were female.

The survey also asked law enforcement to identify the social and economic factors that contributed to the trafficking. Often, victims have vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit. Among those law enforcement agencies that completed this section, victims that were encountered by law enforcement were most likely to have substance abuse issues. Twenty-one victims were identified as having alcohol and/or drug dependency issues. However, this does not indicate whether the alcohol/drug dependencies were a vulnerability that facilitated the trafficking, or whether the alcohol/drug dependencies were developed after the trafficking began.

The other biggest area of risk listed was the victim being oppressed, marginalized, and/or impoverished. Twelve victims were categorized this way. Only one victim was identified as having been a runaway and homeless youth.

Finally, law enforcement was asked to identify where the victims originated. The agencies indicated that most of the victims were from Ohio, but local law enforcement also identified victims from Kentucky and Florida.

Trafficker Information

Law enforcement identified a total of 21 traffickers, with all traffickers being identified as sex traffickers. The race of the traffickers was almost evenly split between Black and White, with eleven traffickers identified as Black and 10 traffickers identified as White.

Reported ages of the traffickers ranged from the 21-29 year old range to the 41-59 age range. The ages of the human traffickers were identified as the following:

- 21-29 years old: 10
- 30-40 years old: 7
- 41-59 years old: 4

Twenty of the traffickers were male, and one female trafficker was identified.

Information was also gathered about the trafficker's methods of recruitment. Law enforcement agencies broadly mentioned drugs; the internet; and elements of force, fraud, or coercion as the three largest categories that traffickers used to recruit their victims. Three agencies mentioned drugs being used as a method of recruitment, and two agencies specifically mentioned heroin. Four agencies listed the internet as facilitating the recruiting, with the websites of Facebook, plentyoffish.com, and Backpage.com being specifically mentioned.

The last category of recruitment methods listed by local law enforcement can be broadly categorized as force, fraud, or coercion. Two agencies specifically mentioned that force was used to recruit the victim, with one of these agencies stating that "violence" was used as a recruitment method. Another agency listed "enticement and coercion" for the four victims that it encountered. Finally, one agency stated that the victim was deaf (a vulnerability factor), and the trafficker recruited the victim by convincing her that "she has to follow their orders or bad things will happen such as once when they killed a dog she became attached to because she ran away several times." Finally, one agency mentions that the trafficker began dating the victim before supplying her heroin and forcing her to prostitute. These methods are illustrative of the methods traffickers employ to recruit and control their victims.

John Information

Only one law enforcement agency reported any data on the buyers of trafficking. With sex trafficking, these consumers are commonly referred to as “johns.” The one agency that did list consumers identified 30 consumers of sex trafficking. This was based on the law enforcement agency’s belief that one of the victims it identified had 30 johns.

Trafficking Patterns and Methods of Transportation

The final categories of information request trafficking patterns and the method with which traffickers transport their victims. The trafficking patterns used by a trafficker can be intra-city, inter-city, intra-state, inter-state, or inter-continental. From the data reported by local law enforcement, it appears that many of the human trafficking victims identified in Ohio are being moved across city and state lines. Nineteen victims were reported as being trafficked across city lines. Thirteen victims were identified as having been trafficked across state lines. Six victims were identified as being transported within the state, eleven victims were identified as having been trafficked only within one city, and no victims were identified as having been transported across international borders.

Law enforcement was also asked to identify the methods the traffickers used to transport the victims. Law enforcement could choose by motor vehicle, airplane, watercraft, or could fill in a response under the “other” category. Thirty-four victims were identified as having been trafficked by a motor vehicle, and there were no victims identified as having been trafficked by any of the other methods listed. However, one law enforcement agency indicated that the victim it identified was trafficked by foot in the fill-in space designated for “other.” Given the prevalence and visibility to law enforcement of street-level trafficking, perhaps a category should be included in the future to indicate that the method of transportation was merely by foot.



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