The following is a compendium of news reports over the last month that may be of interest to our AG offices that are dealing with human trafficking issues. Neither the National Association of Attorneys General nor the National Attorneys General Training & Research Institute expresses a view as to the accuracy of news accounts, nor as to the position expounded by the authors of the hyperlinked articles.

**October 2014**

**News from AG Offices**

[**Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi**](https://www.floridagov.com) announced that human trafficking charges have been filed against three defendants involving both commercial sexual activity and labor trafficking. The Orlando Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation revealed that Richard Rawles, who has 47 felony and 10 misdemeanor arrests, and two associates posted advertisements with pictures of recently released prisoners from the Lowell Correctional Institution State Prison on web sites. The women were then taken around Central Florida to commit acts of prostitution, supplied with drugs, threatened and beaten, and were not allowed to leave without one of the men accompanying them.

The [**Nevada Attorney General’s Office**](https://www.nv.gov) conducted free training in communities around Nevada to improve community responses to victims of violence, including human trafficking, sexual assault, and domestic violence.

[**Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt**](https://www.okeeffeok.gov) hosted the 2014 two-day conference on Domestic Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Human Trafficking for law enforcement, investigators, prosecutors, and allied professionals. Director Darrell Weaver of the [**Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics & Dangerous Drugs Control**](https://ocd.ok.gov) recently testified before members of an Oklahoma legislative panel that commercial sexual exploitation of young people has become more profitable than drug trafficking in the state.

[**Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson**](https://www.ag.wa.gov) filed an amicus brief in the state Supreme Court in a lawsuit filed by children who were sold on Backpage.com as prostitutes. Last year, a federal district court judge held that Backpage.com was immune from penalties under the federal Communications Decency Act. In the state case, attorneys for the child survivors argue that, by labeling the page containing the sex trafficking ads “Escorts,” that section of the web page was specifically designed to facilitate prostitution.
**Federal Legislative Activity**

President Obama signed [H.R. 4980](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/4980) into law on September 29. The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act amends the Social Security Act by requiring that each state’s plan demonstrate that it has policies and procedures for identifying and determining appropriate services (for each child and youth for which the state has responsibility for placement, supervision, and care) where there is reasonable cause to believe the child or youth is, or is at risk of becoming, a victim of sex trafficking.

The Bringing Missing Children Home Act, [S. 1936](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1936), passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee. A summary of the bill is available [here](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1936). If enacted, it would require law enforcement to coordinate directly with the state and local child welfare systems when a child is reported missing.

[S. 2646](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2646), the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act, was introduced into the U.S. Senate. It includes provisions that would support grants for both local police task forces and nonprofit groups, items which are the subject of a House bill which has already passed.

[H.R. 5607](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/5607) was introduced this month. It would establish a United States Advisory Council on Human trafficking to review federal government policy on human trafficking.

On September 11, the House Energy and Health Subcommittee held a hearing on the [Trafficking Awareness and Training for Health Care Act of 2014](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/5607). Dr. Laura Lederer, former Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons for the U.S. State Department and founder of the non-profit Global Centurion [testified](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/5607) that a recent study found that, out of 107 sex trafficking survivors surveyed, 87.7% reported seeking care from a healthcare professional during the time of trafficking. The study also found that 55% of the women surveyed had undergone at least one abortion and 30% had multiple abortions during the time of trafficking. More than half said the abortions were not of their choice.

**State Legislative Activity**

In California, Governor Jerry Brown signed several human trafficking bills into law. [AB 1585](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavFullText.xhtml?billId=abd00-1585-0) allows a victim of human trafficking who was previously convicted of solicitation or prostitution to petition the court to set aside the conviction on proof that the offense was the result of being a human trafficking victim. [AB 1610](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavFullText.xhtml?billId=abd00-1610-0) allows the conditional examination of a material witness or victim when a defendant has been charged with human trafficking and there is evidence that the individual has been dissuaded from testifying at trial. [AB 1791](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavFullText.xhtml?billId=abd00-1791-0) strengthens penalties for soliciting and related offenses involving minors. [SB 477](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavFullText.xhtml?billId=sbd00-0477-0) aims to protect foreign workers by requiring foreign labor contractors to register with the Labor Commissioner and penalizes intimidation, discrimination, and other violations. [SB 955](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavFullText.xhtml?billId=sbd00-0955-0) authorizes use of wiretapping in human trafficking investigations. [SB 1164](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavFullText.xhtml?billId=sbd00-1164-0) allows inclusion of human trafficking education in the Health Framework for California public schools.
On September 2, Pennsylvania Act 105 officially became law. This law provides the Commonwealth's first comprehensive legal definition of trafficking, ensures that law enforcement is properly trained, and strengthens the protection for victims.

The Michigan House has passed H.B. 5233. This bill allows for the forfeiture of assets, including homes and cash, in a number of cases including human trafficking cases.

**State Investigations/Arrests/Prosecutions**

**Alaska**

**Sept. 30, 2014:** A recent raid at the Rainbow Spa in a strip mall in Anchorage has led to the arrest of a woman who has since left the state. Two suspected human trafficking victims were found at the business. This is the eighth time police have arrested someone working at the spa since 2002. The day before, Anchorage Police arrested a woman at World Spa for practicing prostitution.

**Sept. 10, 2014:** Alaska State Troopers arrested Leroy Straker Jr. and charged him with two counts of sex trafficking. Investigators were called to a Fairbanks hotel in April after gunshots were reported. During a subsequent investigation by the Special Crimes Investigation Unit, several woman stated that Straker managed and promoted an enterprise in the sex trafficking trade.

**California**

**Sept. 6, 2014:** The San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office has filed human trafficking charges against 38-year old Richard Brooks for pimping out, raping, and drugging a 17-year old. Earlier, police had arrested a Cayucos firefighter on three counts of rape of the same girl.

**Georgia**

**Sept. 6, 2014:** The Georgia Bureau of Investigation and the Newton County Sheriff's Office began investigating allegations that a New York woman and her son, who lived in Georgia, were pimping out an adult female who had limited mental capacity. Jacquelyn Roman and Naquell Roman were extradited from New York back to Georgia and have been charged with a myriad of crimes, including human trafficking.

**Kentucky**

**Sept. 16, 2014:** In Jefferson County, Justin Ritter pled guilty to unlawful transaction with a minor, possession of marijuana, and drug paraphernalia. The plea deal means his recommended sentence will be ten years and he will be required to register as a sex offender.

**Louisiana**
Sept. 11, 2014: Baton Rouge police arrested Emmanuel Baily of Ft. Smith, Arkansas, on human trafficking, drug possession, and fugitive from justice charges. A woman who had been arrested said that she had been forced to prostitute by Baily who threatened her and her family with harm.

Sept. 11, 2014: After a Natchitoches Paris District judge lowered his bail from $635,000 to $75,000, David Rodriguez was able to bond out of jail. He is accused of keeping a woman as his slave. Natchitoches Sherriff Victor Jones has said that this case is “the most severe and disturbing case of human trafficking ever investigated in Natchitoches Parish.”

Maryland

Sept. 10, 2014: Charles County Circuit Court Judge Amy Bragunier sentenced Chrishanna Dinkins to four years and six months in jail for human trafficking and profiting from prostitution. The victim was a teen-ager. After release, Dinkins must register as a sex offender.

Missouri

Sept. 17, 2014: A St. Charles County judge has sentenced a 24-year old woman to eight years in prison for trafficking two high school girls. Tiffany Piper told the court that she placed ads online and invited men to pay for sex with the teens in a St. Peters Extended Stay America. Piper’s accomplice, Demond Day, was sentenced to five years in April. The tragic part of this case is that Piper herself was a victim of human trafficking, but she never told officials who had trafficked her. The community knows the Piper family because, in 2005, Tiffany’s younger sister, Bianca, vanished when she was 13. She has never been found.

New York

Sept. 20, 2014: New York State Police investigators working with the U.S. Marshals Service recently apprehended two fugitives. Tyrik Styles and Tyana Johnson were arrested on charges of sex trafficking, rape, promoting prostitution and assault and turned over to the New York City Police Department’s custody.

Sept. 9, 2014: Alexander Adams was sentence in Orange County Court to five to fifteen years in state prison after he pled guilty to sex trafficking charges in June. Adams had recruited at least 10 women to work for him. Many of them were homeless and addicted to heroin.

North Carolina

Sept. 30, 2014: Raleigh police responded to a call from a woman who alleged that her identification, cell phone, and $560 in cash were taken by two individuals because the woman told them she wanted to stop prostituting herself. Investigators learned that she was being trafficked by individuals who were acting under the direction of Travis Sentall Robinson who was incarcerated after having been arrested in Atlanta for human trafficking.
Two individuals, Oyarmma Robinson and Ashley Robinson, have been arrested and charged with trafficking.

North Dakota

Sept. 11, 2014: A man was arrested by Bismarck police and charged with Class A felony attempted human trafficking after he allegedly arranged a sexual encounter with someone he thought was a 14-year old girl.

Ohio

Sept. 12, 2014: An investigation by the Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force led to the arrest of a father and son on human trafficking charges. The pair rented hotel rooms in Columbus for women, including a juvenile, to bring clients for prostitution. They have pled guilty in federal court to the charges.

Oklahoma

Sept. 26, 2014: After a two-year investigation Altus police have arrested six individuals involved with the victimization of a 13-year old girl. Two more individuals were arrested later, including one who police consider the ringleader. Police were initially alerted that something was wrong when the child failed to show up to school and started getting in trouble with the law.

Oregon

Sept. 25, 2014: Three men have been sentenced for their roles in prostituting a 13-year old girl in 2012. Steven Toth, the manager of a Beaverton strip club who hired the girl to dance nude and have sex with customers, was sentenced to 15 years. Her pimp, Victor Moreno-Hernandez, who split profits from the prostitution with Toth, was sentenced, after being found guilty, to 30 years and 10 months and was also ordered to pay $150,000 in compensation. Yahir Muniz pled guilty to sexually abusing the child and was sentenced to six years, three months.

Pennsylvania

Sept. 24, 2014: The Delaware County District Attorney’s Office announced that an Upper Darby man has been charged under a new state law that toughens penalties for human trafficking. He and another man allegedly picked up two girls from a church-based residential facility for adjudicated, dependent, or delinquent youths and engaged in sexual relationships with them.

Sept. 5, 2014: A preliminary hearing was held involving charges that a Drexel Hill man raped and trafficked an 18-year old. According to the victim, she answered an ad for a job as a home health care aide on Craig’s List. When she was informed she had the job, she was asked to fill out additional paper work. Noticing that the job was for escort services, she
said she wasn’t interested. The defendant then forced her to take her clothes off, photographed her, and raped her.

Rhode Island

Sept. 19, 2014: Arlington, Massachusetts, police have arrested two Rhode Island men who allegedly kidnapped a girl living in a group home and took her to Rhode Island, forcing her into prostitution. They will be tried in federal court in Rhode Island.

Sept. 16, 2014: Pawtucket police credit a young woman, who was raped in 2011 and has now agreed to come forward and press charges against her rapists, with helping to break up a sex-trafficking ring. At the time of the assault, the woman was a student in college. Although she contacted police, she decided not to go forward with the case, fearing for her safety and wanting to put the incident behind her. However, when police told her this year that another young woman was found in her rapists’ apartment, she agreed to pursue her case so that they could not harm others. The case against Curtis Maxie and his two compatriots has grown as an investigation continued. Police now have identified about 50 women who they believe were prostituted by Maxie and have identified about four dozen men who paid for escorts.

Sept. 9, 2014: Warwick police officers arrested a Massachusetts man for trafficking a woman from Oklahoma. They were called to respond to a disturbance in a parking lot at a hotel near the Providence airport. The woman told police that Wilson posted her photo on a website and was selling her for sex.

South Dakota

Sept. 4, 2014: Sioux Falls police arrested three men on drug and hiring sexual activity charges after they investigated a report of suspicious activity at a local hotel. Entering the hotel room, they found a Minneapolis woman who alleged that two people from Minnesota had forced her into prostitution. Police then found and arrested the pair.

Texas

Sept. 25, 2014: Lubbock police officers arrested Smitty James Lyons for promotion of prostitution in regard to prostituting his 8-month pregnant girlfriend. According to police documents, the woman said Lyons told her to prostitute herself because he lost his job. He kept all the money. The woman has recently discovered she has HIV.

Virginia

Sept. 26, 2014: Winchester police arrested a woman after she was indicted on charges of human trafficking and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. She is charged with knowing that her 13-year old daughter was engaging in sexual relations with Jose Hernandez-Hernandez. Virginia law states that a parent may be charged with human trafficking if that person consents to a child being taken or detained for unlawful sexual intercourse. Hernandez-Hernandez has also been indicted.
**Washington**

**Sept. 26, 2014**: The Kitsap County Prosecutor’s Office announced the sentencing of a Bremerton man to 40½ years in prison for his involvement in the sex trafficking of women, including two who were minors. Alexander Harris was found guilty of six counts of promoting sexual abuse of a minor, witness tampering, and promoting second-degree prostitution. The jury found eight aggravating factors at the time of the verdict. This allowed the judge to sentence Harris beyond the standard range.

**Articles of General Interest**

The State Justice Initiative-funded “Guide to Human Trafficking for State Courts” is available electronically. The guide provides an excellent resource for court practitioners about the types, dynamics, and implications of modern day slavery.

U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations recently commissioned a Maine Human Trafficking Task Force. The task force will be composed of several Maine law enforcement offices, Canada Border Services Agency, Customs and Border Patrol personnel, and members of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

Greenville, North Carolina’s Restore One is raising money towards building Anchor House. This will be the country’s first shelter for male sex trafficking victims. Eighteen percent of the reported victims in North Carolina are men.

The County Council in Prince George’s County, Maryland, is considering a law that cracks down on human trafficking by banning hourly room rates.

The New York City-based publication City Limits published an article stressing that increased awareness about the horrors of sex trafficking should not obscure the issues surrounding labor trafficking in this country. A report released by the City Bar Justice Center’s Immigrant Women and Children Project in 2013 found that over 50% of the trafficking cases in New York City were labor trafficking. Domestic work represented 80% of those labor trafficking cases.

Polaris has released its 2014 state ratings on human trafficking laws.

Six farmworkers have sued C&C Agricultural Farms in Clewiston, Florida, its two owners and a crew leader alleging that they were forced to work for the farms and threatened with guns or deportation if they refused. They allege that they worked for 10 to 12 hours in the fields and then 3 to 8 hours in the packing houses during harvest time.

Demanding Justice has released its 2014 statistics that capture the state reported convictions of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children crimes.

A new University of Minnesota study found that juvenile female sex trafficking in Minneapolis operates under a “brutal business model that relies on violence and
manipulation.” It also found that more than half the victims studied were runaways or juveniles who missed their curfew and were overwhelmingly from poor areas.