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.

January 2015

News from AG Offices

California Attorney General Kamala Harris announced the arrest of four suspects accused of operating a sex trafficking ring out of Emeryville, California. The co-owners of Acucare Oriental Massage are also accused of giving bribes to an Emeryville Police Captain who was working undercover, posing as a corrupt officer. The four arrested face a total of 30 felony charges.

In recognition of January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi encouraged all Floridians to engage in the fight to identify and protect potential victims. As part of her commitment to stop human trafficking, Gen. Bondi hosted a joint training session with Mexican and El Salvadoran prosecutors on cybercrime issues, including human trafficking.

Montana Attorney General Tim Fox helped unveil the state's first ever anti-trafficking sign posted on a semi-truck. The truck is owned by Watkins and Shepard Trucking. The sign was unveiled in connection with the first Annual Run for Freedom, a 5K to raise money for the Montana Anti-Human Trafficking Project. The Montana DOJ will introduce a bill in the upcoming legislative session to help revise Montana's human trafficking laws.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley has included in his legislative proposals that human trafficking offenders be added to South Dakota’s Sex Offender Registry.

Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring launched a statewide campaign to raise awareness in the Commonwealth about human trafficking and resources available to victims. Billboards and signs are being erected on major highways across the state and signage posted at Virginia rest areas.

Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson's office released an initial report to the legislature detailing preliminary findings and recommendations from the Commercially
Sexually Exploited children Statewide Coordinating committee. The Committee will issue its final report in 2015. The initial recommendations include strengthening victim services, supporting local task forces, funding data collection, implementing demand reduction strategies, and designating a single government information portal.

Federal Legislative Activity

H.R. 4573 has been received by the Senate and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. This legislation would provide advance notice of intended travel by registered child-sex offenders outside the United States to the government of the destination country and requests that foreign governments notify the United States when a known child sex-offender is travelling here.

State Legislative Activity

In the September 2014 State Human Trafficking News, California’s new laws regarding human trafficking were reported. However, we recently became aware of another law that was signed into law about the same time. AB1147 overturned a previous California law which had taken away from local jurisdictions the ability to use zoning to weed out sketchy massage parlors. This law was passed in an attempt to professionalize the massage industry by creating a state regulatory body for massage parlor licensing. The unintended consequences, however, caused massage parlors to proliferate with quite a few of them hosting human trafficking victims. Police departments in larger jurisdictions, such as San Francisco, became overwhelmed in trying to investigate and shut down these parlors. Under AB1147, returns regulatory zoning power to local governments.

Georgia Senator Renee Unterman has pre-filed SB 8 which would immunize child sex trafficking victims in the state from prosecution and increase medical treatment and counseling availability.

Local Legislative Activity

Baltimore City Councilman James Kraft has proposed legislation that would require Baltimore hotels to train their staffs to recognize signs of forced prostitution. The legislation would also prohibit rooms from being rented for less than half a day. The legislation is based on a similar law that is in effect in Prince George's County.

State Investigations/Arrests/Prosecutions

California

Dec. 31: San Rafael Police announced the arrest of a 19-year old woman on human trafficking charges. A juvenile victim had been sending text messages to her family asking them for help.

Dec. 19: Stockton police announced that Chester Brown, 20, has been found guilty of human trafficking. He was arrested after a 17-year old contacted officials about him, saying
that he had forced her into prostitution. When he was arrested, he was with three other girls, two 14-year olds and a 16-year old.

Dec. 8: San Rafael police announced the arrest of 43-year old Deda Carter, booking him on suspicion of human trafficking, criminal threats, and taking a person for prostitution without consent. A 36-year old woman told police that Carter forced her into prostitution and had been holding her under continuous threat since October. She said Carter would watch her 2-year old while she performed the sex acts.

Dec. 7: San Rafael police arrested a man and a woman on pimping allegations in Novato. The investigation was launched after the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children sent a tip to a human trafficking task force in Marin.

Colorado


Dec. 12: Colorado Springs police, Colorado State Patrol, and officials from Homeland Security raided three Colorado Springs massage parlors as part of a human trafficking investigation. A man and woman were arrested on suspicion of human trafficking, pimping, and keeping a place of prostitution.

Florida

Dec. 30: An undercover operation by the Sarasota Police Department led to the arrest of 24-year old Maurice Williams on charges of trafficking a 16-year old girl.

Dec. 8: Citing the connection between prostitution and human trafficking, Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd announced that a four-day undercover sex sting resulted in the arrests of 61 people from across Florida.

Idaho

Dec. 11: After an investigation, prompted by information from probation and parole officers that a minor was being sexually exploited, Boise police arrested Jessica Kaufman, charging her with human trafficking, procurement of prostitution, and soliciting a minor for prostitution.

Maryland

Dec. 2: State troopers and investigators from the Maryland State Police Criminal Enforcement Division responded to a tip that a woman was being held against her will at an America's Best Value Inn in Princess Anne. Subsequently two men were arrested and charged with human trafficking.

Massachusetts
Dec. 8: Lowell police arrested a fourth suspect in a case involving the sex trafficking of a 13-year old girl. Isabel Santos has been charged with sex trafficking acts, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and delivery of liquor to a minor. She allegedly supplied condoms and her apartment for her sons to have sex with the 13-year old victim. Three others suspects were arrested on November 25, including Michael Feliz, a member of a notorious street gang, who is accused of plying the child with heroin, cocaine, and alcohol, raping her, and selling her sexual services to more than five men.

Michigan

Dec. 2: Dickinson County prosecutors charged Jonathan Vyvyan in May with human trafficking. Early this month, he pled no contest to attempted human trafficking and a guilty plea to failing to register as a sex offender. As part of his plea agreement was sentenced to 12 months in jail and 5 years of probation. In 2010, he pled no contest to sexually abusing a 22-month old baby.

Minnesota

Dec. 22: The Ramsey County Attorney’s Office obtained a first degree sex trafficking of a minor conviction against Jonathan Edwards and Kauser Mohamoud Usuf. Their sentencing will occur in February. After the verdict was announced, Edwards lunged at the county prosecutor and yelled and spit at her. Spectators started yelling at the jurors that the verdict was racist and deputies had to be brought in to restore order. Edwards has now been charged with assault.

Mississippi

Dec. 20: Lauderdale County Sheriff’s Department investigators arrested a 51-year old man on charges of human trafficking. He is accused of propositioning a juvenile for sex using electronic means.

New Jersey

Dec. 29: Englewood police and the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office Human Trafficking Division have arrested a 51-year old Chinese woman on promoting prostitution and maintaining a nuisance charge. She allegedly ran a brothel out of an Englewood, New Jersey, rented home, prostituting three young Chinese women. Further charges are pending.

Dec. 4: Bergen County Prosecutor’s investigators and police raided a New Milford massage parlor that was offering sex for money while also illegally housing employees. Ta Li Mi, a 50-year old Chinese national, was arrested in an undercover sting. The police are investigating human trafficking charges.

New York
Dec. 17: In the first human trafficking case prosecuted in Bergen County under the law enacted in New Jersey in July 2013, Miguel Hernandez pled guilty to trafficking a 16-year-old girl. Hernandez was arrested after a traffic stop in February and was initially charged with possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. The child found in the car eventually told police that she had engaged in sex for money and that Hernandez was her driver.

North Carolina
Dec. 18: Two men, Jeremy Moots and Justin Angermeier, pled guilty to two counts of contributing to the delinquency of a juvenile in connection with a labor trafficking case. They were accused of holding two girls against their will and making them sell magazines. They were sentenced to 120 days in exchange for their cooperation in the ongoing investigation of Midwest Circulations, a door-to-door magazine sales company based in Cameron, Missouri.

Dec. 1: Greenville police arrested a man and a woman and charged them with human trafficking of a child victim. The arrests were prompted when a 14-year-old girl tried to use counterfeit money at a Dollar Tree.

North Dakota
Dec. 24: Williams County prosecutors dropped human trafficking charges against Keith A. Graves when federal prosecutors unsealed a grand jury indictment against Graves on federal human trafficking charges.

Ohio
Dec. 10: Darrell McClendon, 48, was sentenced by a Cuyahoga County judge to 15 years in prison for human trafficking. McClendon's daughter, Chanesha Bunner, was sentenced to 18 months in prison for serving as a prostitute and for being the enforcer of the prostitution ring that her dad ran.

Tennessee
Dec. 18: Shelby County District Attorney General Amy Weinrich announced that Patrick Cathey pled guilty to eight counts of trafficking a minor for commercial sex acts and was sentenced to eight years in prison.

Dec. 15: Memphis police arrested Travis Branch, 23, charging him with sex trafficking, aggravated statutory rape, sexual exploitation of a minor, and aggravated sexual exploitation of a minor. A 15-year-old girl told police that Branch had forced her to have sex with at least nine men over the last two weeks and that he had taken nude photos of her and posted them on the Internet.

Dec. 4: The Rutherford County Grand Jury has returned indictments against Adonis Ramon Hart, 35. He has been charged one count of trafficking for sexual servitude, one count of
conspiracy to commit Trafficking for sexual servitude, one count of rape, and one count of aggravated statutory rape.

**Texas**

**Dec. 11:** Lone Star Fugitive Task Force officers arrested two individuals for their suspected involvement in the cross-country sex trafficking of underage girls. They are just two of 22 alleged gang members and associates that were charged in a 64-page grant jury indictment.

**Washington**

**Dec. 29:** The Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office arrested a 44-year old woman for investigation of promotion of sexual abuse of a minor. The alleged victim is the woman’s 16-year old daughter. Relatives have told police that they believe the child has been trafficked since she was 11.

**Articles of General Interest**

The first federal conviction of a website operator for facilitation of prostitution led to a plea of guilty by the operator of my RedBook.com. Eric Omuro pled guilty to using a facility of interstate commerce with the intent to facilitate prostitution. His co-defendant, Annemarie Lanoce, pled guilty to assisting Omuro in the operation of the website. They will be sentenced in March.

Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant is forming a task force on human trafficking. The task force will include the Mississippi Attorney General or his designee.

The role of human trafficking in terroristic activities has become evident in the recent actions of ISIS and Boko Haram. This article investigates the intersection between those two crimes.

An innovative program in Maryland provides homes for human trafficking victims. A non-profit organization, Maryland’s Safe House of Hope, finds volunteers who open their homes to people exploited through prostitution or human trafficking.

The Department of Labor has issued its sixth edition of “List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor.” The 2005 Trafficking Victims Protection Act requires that DOL issue this list. The current list includes 136 goods from 74 countries.

An article in the Las Vegas Sun opines that Obama’s immigration order may benefit those in Nevada who are the victims of labor trafficking.

Swedish critics of the law which criminalizes those seeking the services of a prostitute, but legalizes sex work, claim that that Sweden’s claim of success at reducing prostitution is an illusion. These critics claim that a 2010 Swedish government study used faulty methodology and that the government is only looking at streetwalkers and not those who work out of bars or who advertise on the Internet.
An article in the Boston Globe highlighted the potential for labor trafficking in restaurants and the need for more inspectors who are trained to ferret out not only labor violations but potential trafficking violations as well.

Survivors Ink, a program that raises money to cover up tattoos and scars that brand sex trafficking victims as the property of their pimps, has assisted their tenth survivor.

The Criminal Justice Division of the Texas Governor’s Office awarded a grant to the University of Texas, working in partnership with Allies Against Slavery, to document the extent of human trafficking across the state.

A group of prominent Atlanta attorneys has founded Civil Lawyers Against World Sex-Slavery (CLAWS). The group is hoping to curb sex trafficking by suing the venues and the customers who buy sex.