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 state-focused 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.

**July 2015**

**News from AG Offices**

**Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi** convened Florida’s Statewide Council on Human Trafficking at Stetson University in Tampa. The 15-member council is composed of law enforcement officers, prosecutors, legislators, and experts in fields of health, education, and social services. During the meeting, the council members discussed new human trafficking legislation, victim protection methods, and the enhancement of law enforcement tools and training to shutdown human trafficking rings.

**Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt** announced a statewide billboard campaign aimed at reaching both trafficking victims who may be unaware that resources exist to help them and community members who can help identify suspicious activity. Partnering with Clear Channel Outdoor and Lamar Advertising in Kansas, the campaign will run in various locations across the state for the next 12 months.

**Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette** announced that criminal charges have been lodged against Jahan Satati Green of Inkster; the charges include human trafficking and conducting a criminal enterprise. He is alleged to have orchestrated an online prostitution operation since 2006. Particular allegations including trafficking and assaulting two young victims for more than six years, arranging transportation for girls to Detroit-area hotels to serve as prostitutes, and taking all the money the victims received for himself.

**Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson** announced the hiring of Stephen Patrick O’Meara to serve as his office’s human trafficking coordinator. O’Meara will serve as the point person in the development and implementation of a statewide strategic plan to combat human trafficking.

**Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt** announced that Mario Lamont Jones II pled guilty to enticing a victim to engage in prostitution in Las Vegas. The charges of kidnapping, living
from the earnings of a prostitute, and child abuse were dismissed. He will be sentenced in mid-July and faces three to 10 years in state prison and sex offender registration.

**New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas** has applied for a $750,000 federal grant to double the number of personnel dedicated to human trafficking investigations and prosecutions in his office. According to **Deputy Attorney General Sharon Pino**, should the office receive the grant money, the attorney general’s office would hire two more investigators and use the money to fund a statewide task force on human trafficking.

**Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Kilmartin** has requested legislation that would require individuals convicted of human trafficking offenses to register as sex offenders. The bill, **SO926**, is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

**Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes’** **SECURE Strike Force**, after completing a ten-month investigation into sex trafficking, executed search warrants on businesses, residences, and cars in Salt Lake, Davis, and Weber counties. All of the businesses served with warrants were massage parlors. The investigation was conducted in partnership with the Utah Department of Public Safety and federal, county, and city law enforcement agencies. The alleged mastermind, Changfen Lin, has been arrested and is being held at the Weber County jail pending official charges being filed.

**Federal Court Decisions**

In *City of Los Angeles, California v. Patel*, No. 13-1175 (U.S. June 22, 2015), the Court, in a 5-4 decision, held that a Los Angeles ordinance requiring hotel operators to record and keep specified information about their guests was facially unconstitutional under the Fourth Amendment. The portion of the ordinance at issue required that the guest records be made available to the Los Angeles police department for inspection without warrants. Failure to make the records available subjected a hotel operator to a misdemeanor charge.

**State Legislative Activity**

Legislators in **Maryland** passed, and Governor Larry Hogan signed, **SB 520**. This new legislation provides a victim of human trafficking an affirmative defense of duress to a prostitution charge where the trafficker was charged for the offense.

**Georgia** Governor Nathan Deal signed **SB 8** into law. Known as both Rachel’s Law and the Safe Harbor Law, it sets strict punishment for anyone found guilty of human trafficking and allows the criminal justice system to treat sexually exploited children as victims instead of as criminals.

**Hawaii** Governor David Ige announced that he will veto the human trafficking bill recently passed by the legislature. The bill has been controversial among the chief prosecutors and police in the islands.

The **Pennsylvania** Senate’s Judiciary Committee is considering **SB 851**. This bill contains a safe harbor provision for juveniles who are victims of human trafficking, requires police to
immediately notify the commonwealth’s Department of Human Services upon discovering a juvenile victim, and contains a unique provision whereby a victim who has been branded with a tattoo will be reimbursed for the removal of that tattoo should expenses exceed $100.

State Investigations/Arrests/Prosecutions

Alabama

June 15, 2015: In Colombiana, 54-year old Gary Ronald Smith has been arrested and charged with one felony count of second degree human trafficking. He also is charged with carrying a pistol without a permit.

California

June 23, 2015: An investigation by Oakland Police and the Alameda County District Attorney’s Human Trafficking unit has led to the sentencing of four young men for human trafficking. Beginning in December 2013, four girls — 13, 16, and two who were 17 years old — were victimized by the men. The investigation began when one of the girls intentionally got caught shoplifting lingerie from a Target store. The ringleader, Isaiah Seymour, 22, was sentenced to 24 years in state prison. Delvahn Mosley-Davis, 20, and Gary Holt, 20, were each sentenced to 15 years; Matthew Brio, 26, who drove the girls to “dates” but was uninvolved in the initial gang rape that started the girls’ ordeal, was sentenced to 10 years.

June 18, 2015: Sonoma County District Attorney Jill Ravitch announced that Abdelaziz Jamal Thomas was sentenced to six years in prison for pimping a minor and for statutory rape.

June 4, 2015: An Orange County judge sentenced Laton Lateef Belle, 29, to five years and eight months in prison on his guilty plea to charges of sex trafficking, pimping, and pandering. His victim was a 25-year-old woman who he threatened so that she would not attempt to leave her situation.

June 2, 2015: Contra County deputy district attorney Aron DeFerrari reported that three people were found guilty of multiple felonies related to human trafficking. The victim was a woman who had rented a room from one of the defendants. When she returned to the home and then tried to leave, she was dragged back inside, sexually assaulted by the two male defendants, and overheard the three discuss requiring her to prostitute herself to repay a disputed $800 debt.

Connecticut

June 29, 2015: Stratford police arrested Raymond Jackson, 36, in connection with an investigation of a human trafficking ring. Jackson allegedly brought young women from New York and New Jersey to work as prostitutes. He is being held in lieu of a $100,000 bond.
Florida

**June 24, 2015:** A man from DeBary was arrested after he tried to coax a 17-year old girl into prostitution, according to the Seminole County Sheriff’s Office. He was arrested and charged with human trafficking involving a minor.

**June 18, 2015:** Tallahassee police were called to the Super 8 motel by a woman who said she had had a fight with Brandon Ellis. An investigation revealed that she and another woman were being prostituted by Ellis. The victim alleged that Ellis had threatened to hurt her family if she didn’t make enough money for him. Court records revealed that Ellis was angry because he was in Tallahassee to make money and he felt that the women acted as though they were on vacation. Ellis has been charged with human trafficking and living off the earnings of prostitution.

**June 2, 2015:** Lily Noelle Karolyi was arrested by Miami-Dade police on human trafficking charges. She allegedly befriended a 15-year old runaway at a Miami motel and told the child she could stay with her but would have to earn her way by prostituting herself. Karolyi called in her friend, Latasha Renee Hunt, to assist her in giving the teen-ager a makeover, buying a wig, and teaching her how to pose for Backpage photos. A 16-year old witness was aware of the situation and called police. Hunt was also arrested on charges of failing to report child abuse, giving a false name, and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Karolyi’s six-month old child has been removed from her custody.

Georgia

**June 19, 2015:** According to Cobb County Assistant District Attorney Susan Treadway, Marez Martell Fuque was sentenced to 15 years in prison on his pleading guilty to trafficking a 17-year old girl in Smyrna. The victim called 911 to report her situation. While Fuque was incarcerated, he contacted Mariah Rutledge and Naquana James by phone and discussed paying off the victim to ensure she did not testify. Both women have pled guilty to charges of influencing a witness.

**June 3, 2015:** Investigators from the Lowndes County Sheriff’s Office arrested Omar Stoute on human trafficking charges. He reportedly transported two females into the county for prostitution purposes, sent them out on dates, threatened them with violence, and took all the money that they had earned from them.

Kansas

**June 23, 2015:** The Reno County District Attorney’s Office has announced that charges will be refiled against a 52-year old man under a section of the Kansas human trafficking law that forbids “intentionally recruiting a person to work involuntarily by force.” He is accused of making a woman, who was pregnant with his child, to work for her food and of hiding her identification forms.
Louisiana

**June 19, 2015:** Acting on a tip from the Houston Police Department regarding a runaway 16-year old, the Calcasieu Parish Sheriffs Office arrested Mark A. Cook on human trafficking charges and rescued the teen-ager. Cook is a registered sex offender. He has been charged with trafficking, pandering, and violating sex offender registration.

**June 2, 2015:** Louisiana State Police, assisted by the New Orleans Police, the FBI, and Kenner Police, arrested 26-year-old James Muse and charged him with human trafficking and prostitution. A 17-year old was rescued.

Massachusetts

**June 19, 2015:** The Plymouth County District Attorney and Plymouth Police Chief announced the arrest of nine people on charges ranging from sex trafficking to possession of child pornography. The charges are in connection with an investigation into three massage parlors in Plymouth.

**June 5, 2015:** Suffolk District Attorney Daniel F. Conley announced that Dominic Toledo, 24, pled guilty to charges of human trafficking, rape of a child, deriving support from prostitution, and inducing a minor into prostitution and was sentenced to five to seven years in state prison. Toledo admitted to exploiting a 15-year-old girl by advertising her for sale on the Internet and requiring her to prostitute herself.

Maryland

**June 26, 2015:** Baltimore police and the FBI raided three strip clubs in Baltimore in connection to a human trafficking investigation.

**June 12, 2015:** The Wicomico County Attorneys Office announced that Michael Lee McRae Carter, 29, was sentenced to 34 years in prison after he pled guilty to charges involving conspiracy to commit human trafficking. Another defendant, Deandre Thomas Ballard, 29, entered an Alford plea and was sentenced to 50 years of active time in prison. Three other defendants await trial in the case. The victim told law enforcement that she was forcefully injected with heroin, taken to different homes and hotels, and forced to have sex with clients.

Michigan

**June 19, 2015:** Mariah Haughton, 17, pled guilty in Ingham County Circuit Court to charges of human trafficking and transporting of a female for the purposes of prostitution in regard to her involvement in a human trafficking ring. She will be sentenced in July. The ring, which operated between March and July 2015, involved teens who were 14 to 18 years of age. Haughton was a recruiter and scheduled appointments for the victims. Another defendant, Christopher Bryant, was charged in federal court; he is appealing his 40-year sentence. Another defendant, Jonathan Purnell, is awaiting trial in state court. The ring allegedly trafficked girls as far away as Arizona and Alabama.
Minnesota

June 26, 2015: A Clay County judge has sentenced 25-year-old Prince Jones to 18 years in prison for sex trafficking a 13-year old runaway. The defense argued that he should receive only a seven-year sentence because police arrested him before the prostitution scheme could be carried out.

June 21, 2015: Ramsey County Attorney John Choi announced that Thomas William Evans pled guilty to sex trafficking charges and admitted to trafficking over 100 girls across 14 states. He is likely to face up to 20 years in prison. As part of his plea deal, he agreed to testify against three other defendants in this case: Suwan Cominique Cross, Ylanda Katrice Foster, and Ishmael Jamaine Williams. One other defendant, Doris Marie Keller, also pled guilty and will likely face 6½ years in prison. The lengthy investigation began with an undercover operation by police.

June 16, 2015: A complaint has been filed in Ramsey County District Court alleging that Rashad Ramon Ivy forced a 23-year old woman to prostitute herself, using her 3-year-old son as hostage to compel cooperation. After Ivy allegedly beat her, he dropped her off at the hospital and told her to say she had been in a car accident and that her pain was “25” on a 1 to 10 scale to ensure she received pain medications.

Mississippi

June 4, 2015: A shooting investigation at a local Biloxi motel became a human trafficking investigation after Biloxi police found a juvenile in the motel room with the suspected shooter. Witnesses identified 39-year old Frederick Lashone Mack of Pensacola, Florida, and his son, Demarcus Mack, as the suspects. They were arrested and charged with armed robbery and human trafficking.

Montana

June 20, 2015: Great Falls police have arrested a man and a woman who allegedly promoted the prostitution of an underage girl. The two defendants allegedly drove a juvenile runaway from Washington to Great Falls for the purpose of prostituting her. Both defendants are 18 years old.

New Jersey

June 16, 2015: The Morris County Prosecutors Office announced that Aldophus Mims, 38, and Deborah Kookan, 42, have been charged with human trafficking for allegedly leading two teens, 15 and 17, into prostitution.

June 6, 2015: Camden County prosecutors announced that two individuals, Van Howell and Krista Burton, were sentenced to five-year sentences after they pled guilty to charges of conspiracy to commit human trafficking.
New Mexico

June 30, 2015: Detectives with the Albuquerque Police Department have arrested a hip-hop artist, Shane Roach, 25, on allegations of human trafficking. Roach goes by the name of “Uncookd,” but he was listed under “Daddy” in the cell phone of a woman who told police he coerced her into working as a prostitute. Arrested with Roach was his 30-year old sister, Angela Santillanes.

New York

June 18, 2015: The Watertown Police Department responded to a call of a suspicious male person at the Comfort Inn. While investigating, the police located two women who said they were forced into prostitution by Leon Bellamy, Jr., and his brother Omar Bellamy. Both Bellamy brothers had earlier been arrested on drug charges.

June 6, 2015: Kadeem Moore, 18, and Francois Cousins, 22, have been arrested and charged with human trafficking in regard to forcing a 16-year old and a 23-year old into prostitution. The older woman called 911 in February reporting their situation but, when police responded, the victims were gone. An undercover agent who was responding to a website ad, located them at a hotel in Jamaica, Queens. They will be prosecuted by the Queens County District Attorney's Office.

North Dakota

June 29, 2015: A Kentucky truck driver has pled not guilty in Burleigh County District Court to charges of attempting human trafficking and promoting obscenity to a minor. Joe Harvey Carlson allegedly responded to an online advertisement that was posted as a part of an undercover operation.

June 28, 2015: Minot police, responding to what at first appeared to be a domestic violence incident, arrested a 22-year old Arizona man, Antoine Dotson, on human trafficking charges.

June 16, 2015: According to Northwest District Court records, a Milwaukee woman has been charged with felony human trafficking and conspiracy to commit theft of property. The trafficking complaint alleges that Rasheda Ross “benefitted financially from knowing participation in sex trafficking and/or promoted, harbored, or transported one or more persons, knowing they would be subject to sex trafficking.”

Oklahoma

June 25, 2015: An undercover investigation by Oklahoma City police has led to the arrest of a man and a woman on multiple charges, including sex trafficking of a minor.

Pennsylvania
June 18, 2015: Allegheny County police filed human trafficking charges against the director of the East McKeesport Public Works Department. He allegedly ordered girls who had been advertised on Backpage to come to his home for sexual services. At least one of the victims was underage.

Texas

June 30, 2015: Forty-five individuals were recently arrested in an undercover sting conducted by the McLennan County Sheriff's Office targeting sex trafficking offenders and prostitution. Four of those arrested were pimping twenty-five women in thirteen different states.

June 3, 2015: San Antonio police rescued a 20-year old woman whom authorities say was being held against her will and used for sex acts. Officials received a tip of possible human trafficking at a motel and arrested Pedro Victuela and Roger Ramirez who were in a room at the motel with the alleged victim. Ramirez also faces a charge of violating parole on a 2001 murder charge.

Wisconsin

June 10, 2015: A two-year investigation into a human trafficking ring, accomplished with help from the Wisconsin Attorney General's Office and other law enforcement agencies, has led to the arrest by Appleton police of three individuals. Additional suspects have been identified and are being sought.

Articles of General Interest

The New York Times reports that both Visa and MasterCard have individually agreed to bar usage of their cards to pay for ads on the adult section Backpage.com.

The U.S. Attorney General, Loretta Lynch, announced that federal officials are looking for cities to participate in the next phase of a program aimed at streamlining trafficking investigations and prosecutions. These Phase II ACTeams will be convened in up to six selected districts around the country.

In the first federal prosecution of a person for running a website advertising prostitution services, Eric Omuro, aka Red, was sentenced to 13 months in prison and ordered to forfeit $1.28 million in cash and property. The website Redbook.com ran for four years between 2010 and 2014. The government stated that more than 50 juveniles had been advertised on the site. A co-defendant who helped run the site will be sentenced later this year.

Particularly egregious and horrifying facts are related in a 41-page federal indictment released by the Justice Department. Esthela M. Clark, 46, of Jacksonville, Florida, has been charged with 12 counts, including labor and sex trafficking offenses.

The Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) is asking the government to fund mandatory training to help flight attendants spot victims of trafficking.
The Oregon Liquor Control Commission has proposed that a Beaverton strip club, Stars Cabaret, be stripped of its liquor license after an investigation revealed that the owners of the club had allowed customers to engage in sexual intercourse with a 13-year old girl on the premises.

A survey, reported in the Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology, found that only 20.4 percent of residents and 8.9 percent of medical students knew whom to call if they encountered a potential trafficking victim. The survey points to the necessity of having standardized human sex trafficking education for physicians, residents, and medical students.