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.

May 2015

News from AG Offices

Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller announced a statewide awareness and education campaign targeting child sex trafficking. The new campaign features a public service announcement starring local professional athletes and sports personalities. The “Indiana’s Not Buying It” campaign was launched in connection with the NCAA Final Four basketball tournament that was played in Indianapolis.

The Office of Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt’s office partnered with the Kansas Department for Children and Families in sponsoring a series of community forums on human trafficking in seven cities across Kansas. These forums were held to discuss ways to build awareness and capacity in local communities for prevention, intervention, and restorative care for victims of human trafficking.

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey reported that a Lowell woman has been indicted for sex trafficking. Alba Andino, 36, is alleged to have targeted vulnerable women and lured them into prostitution. She allegedly posted ads on Backpage offering sexual services from these women. Since the inception of the Attorney General’s Human Trafficking Unit, 20 people have been charged with the crime.

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette was the keynote speaker at “Not in My Backyard: Conquering Human Trafficking in Michigan,” an event sponsored by the metro Detroit Chapter of the US National Committee for UN Women that was held at Walsh College in Troy.

Nevada Attorney General Doug Peterson has posted an information sheet on human trafficking on his website. Gen. Peterson has also been supportive of the Nevada’s legislature passing LB 294 (see below).
New Jersey Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman announced that five people were indicted by a state grand jury on first-degree charges of conspiracy, human trafficking, and promoting prostitution of a minor, a 16-year old girl they trafficked from New York to New Jersey. The girl was advertised on Backpage.com. The indictments stemmed from an investigation by New Jersey’s Division of Criminal Justice and the South Hackensack Police Department.

New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas announced the conviction of Wallace Carson on first degree kidnapping and human trafficking charges. One victim, a 17-year old girl from Albuquerque, was kidnapped from a Greyhound bus station. Another victim was a 21-year old girl that the defendant trafficked from San Antonio into Albuquerque.

South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson lauded the passage of S. 196 which will allow the state grand jury to investigate human trafficking cases. Gen. Wilson also joined Georgia Governor Sam Olens in urging citizens to be on the lookout for signs of human trafficking with the influx of tourists arriving for the 2015 Masters Golf Tournament.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley, along with Minnehaha County Sheriff Mike Milstead and Sioux Falls Police Chief Doug Barthel, announced the arrests of six people resulting from an investigation into sex trafficking in Sioux Falls. The suspects are from South Dakota, Iowa, and Guatemala. They face felony charges of solicitation of a minor.

Federal Legislative Activity

The Senate passed S.178, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act on April 22. It is now back in the House for its consideration.

H.R. 500, the Survivors of Human Trafficking Empowerment Act, was reported out of committee last month. If passed, it would establish a U.S. Advisory Council on human trafficking that would meet at least annually and formulate assessments and recommendations for the Senior Policy Operating Group and the President’s Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

State Legislative Activity

Alabama House members are studying HB 433. This bill would add a safe harbor provision, protecting children engaged in the act of prostitution from being adjudicated delinquent or convicted of a crime. However, a juvenile court would retain jurisdiction of such children to ensure he or she would have access to shelter, health care, and mental health counseling.

In Florida, legislation has been passed, HB 465, to increase the criminal penalties for soliciting, inducing, enticing, or procuring another to commit prostitution. Another piece of legislation, HB 7001, would allow children under 18 who are victims or potential victims of rape and other violent acts to secretly record their attackers or potential attackers. Florida law generally requires two-party consent for recording.
The **Georgia** legislature passed **SB 8**, and it was signed into law by Governor Nathan Deal in early May. The legislation extends the civil statute of limitations for trafficking a person for sexual servitude of a person under 18 from two years to the time the plaintiff is 23. The legislation also establishes a fund in the state treasury that will be used to pay for care and services for victims of human trafficking. Full implementation of this portion of the act will require the passing of a constitutional amendment. SB 8 also provides an affirmative defense for prostitution and similar crimes if these crimes were committed when the individual was less than 18 and trafficked for sexual servitude.

In **Hawaii**, the legislature has passed and sent to the Governor for his signature, **SB 265**. The bill replaces the charge of first-degree “promoting prostitution” with the term “sex trafficking.” It makes sex trafficking a felony, punishable by up to 20 years in prison and up to a $50,000 fine.

**SB 1154** was signed into law by **Idaho** Governor Otter. The legislation allows human trafficking victims to petition courts to vacate and expunge criminal records that occurred while they were enslaved.

The **Illinois** Senate passed **SB 1588**. It is now being considered by the House. It provides victims of sex trafficking with an affirmative defense to prosecution for prostitution.

The **Maine** legislature is considering **LD 651**, an act which would strengthen Maine’s laws against human trafficking.

**LB 294** is coming closer to becoming law in **Nebraska**. The act would create harsher penalties for traffickers who use children and for people who run prostitution houses. It would also make it easier for law enforcement to subpoena and investigate in cases where out-of-state entities are involved.

**North Dakota** Governor Jack Dalrymple signed into law **SB 2107**, which clearly defines the crime of human trafficking and places the focus on helping victims rather than prosecuting them.

**South Carolina** Governor Nikki Haley signed **S. 196** into law. This new legislation will permit a state-wide grand jury to handle human trafficking cases and expands the definition of sex trafficking.

**Washington** Governor Jay Inslee signed **HB 1252** into law. This new legislation punishes spa owners involved in potentially illicit businesses. Under the new law, it is a misdemeanor to knowingly employ an unlicensed massage therapist.

In **Wisconsin**, recently enacted **Act 5** requires the Department of Justice (DOJ) to create and make available posters with the national human trafficking resource center hotline. DOJ is to encourage places such as truck stops, hotels, salons, and hospitals to display the poster.

**Local Legislative Activity**
The Montgomery County, Maryland, Council has unanimously approved a bill to regulate “bodywork” establishments that use practices such as reflexology or acupressure. These types of businesses do not have to be licensed by the state as massage businesses. In the last five years, Montgomery County police have closed 61 bodyworks shops that acted as fronts for crimes including human trafficking, fraud, and prostitution.

State Investigations/Arrests/Prosecutions

California

April 23, 2015: A man and a woman were arrested and accused of holding a 16-year old girl in Marysville as a sex slave for 4 weeks. The arrest occurred after a Marysville police officer stopped a car for a broken brake light. The driver of the car was a 60-year old man. His passenger was 16. When the man said he did not know her, the girl provided a false name and was taken into custody. An out-of-state warrant from Idaho was found and Idaho investigators revealed that she had been reported as a victim of rape and sex trafficking.

April 17, 2015: The Los Angeles County District Attorney's office announced charges against Aistani Halim and Hendra Anwar on three counts each of human trafficking and one count each of conspiracy to commit a crime. They are accused of bringing three women into the county under false pretenses and, when they arrived, taking their passports and forcing them to work in two of their homes and at another property in Beverly Hills.

April 12, 2015: After a two-month investigation, multiple agencies, including the Placer County Sheriff’s Office, California highway Patrol, and Auburn Police, arrested 27-year old York Swygert while he was in line, going through a drive-thru at an In-N-Out Burger restaurant. He was arrested on suspicion of pimping and pandering and human trafficking with a gang enhancement.

April 8, 2015: Sonoma County District Attorney Jill Ravitch announced that Katerina Larrew, 28, pled no contest to trafficking two 11-year old girls, one of whom was a family member. Larrew forced the two girls to pose for photos while nude or wearing lingerie, intending to sell the pictures. She faces 16 years in prison and mandatory registration for life as a sex offender. She will be sentenced May 11.

April 4, 2015: San Rafael police stopped a vehicle for a moving and equipment violation. During the stop, they noticed a young girl in the vehicle with an older man and began to ask questions. The investigation determined that the girl was being sexually exploited and trafficked. Police arrested Dwayne Brian Furgeson who is known in the Bay Area as a rap artist known as Iluzion.

Colorado

April 8, 2015: A Colorado grand jury indicted four people in connection with the trafficking of a 15-year old girl in Ft. Collins. Those charged include Brian Keith Williams.
and Lyn Deshawne, who allegedly taught the child the “rules” of prostitution, an adult engaged in prostitution, and a john.

**April 7, 2015:** In Golden, seven people have been charged for their alleged roles in the sex trafficking of a homeless 17-year old girl. Five of these have been charged with counts which include solicitation of child prostitution. Two others, Cravaughn Maloy and Alicia Sykes, have been charged with seven counts, including pimping a child, pandering a child, soliciting for child prostitution, keeping a place of child prostitutes, and inducement of child prostitution.

**Florida**

**April 28, 2015:** Another victim, this one a juvenile, has come forward in the case of a man and woman from Miami-Dade who were already in jail on human trafficking charges. Rudy Chamorro and Elena Hernandez have been in jail since April 13 on charges of trafficking a 32-year old alleged victim.

**April 14, 2015:** Hialeah Police arrested William Jesus Betancourt, 21, and charged him with human trafficking. He is accused of prostituting out an underage girl.

**April 10, 2015:** A jury in Miami convicted a Hungarian national, Andras Janos Vass, 25, of human trafficking and racketeering. He was found guilty of running a company called Never Sleep, Inc., and forcing three young gay men as sex slaves. Evidence at the trial included the fact that the victims’ documents were taken from them and they and their families back in Hungary were threatened if they refused to work.

**April 8, 2015:** Five people were recently arrested by Pinellas County Sheriff’s officers in connection with two human trafficking cases. The first case involved a 16-year old girl whose mother contacted police after she found pornographic photos and videos of her daughter on the daughter’s cell phone. Two other men were arrested on charges of unlawful sexual activity with a minor. Those arrests occurred after an investigation which began in February after police received a tip about a 16-year old posting prostitution ads on Backpage.com

**Georgia**

**April 30, 2015:** A Gainesville Superior Court Judge sentenced Maria Mercedes Vasquez-Quiroz and Digno de Jesus Mejia to a life sentence after a jury found them guilty on all counts in a child sex trafficking case involving a 4-year old girl and a 2-year old boy.

**April 5, 2015:** Four men were arrested by officers from the Columbia County Sheriff’s Office and the Child Exploitation Task Force. They are accused of sex trafficking on their alleged attempt to have sex with who they thought was a 14-year old girl.
Illinois

**April 2, 2015:** Seven people have been arrested by Aurora police and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents during a two-day operation targeting juvenile sex trafficking. Some of those arrested were attempting to buy sexual services from girls that were told were underage. Several people were also charged with prostitution.

Kansas

**April 30, 2015:** Chien Li and Guihong Xiao, both of Lawrence, Kansas, have been charged with multiple felonies, including aggravated human trafficking. Lawrence police officers conducted search warrants at Spring Massage which is listed on a number of online “erotic massage” websites.

**April 11, 2015:** A husband and wife from Topeka were booked into the Shawnee County jail on felony warrants charging them with aggravated human trafficking. Court documents reveal that an underaged victim was transported from Shawnee County to other Kansas counties and through physical threats forced to engage in prostitution and to ingest controlled drugs.

Maine

**April 16, 2015:** A 52-year old woman pled guilty in Kennebec County Superior Court to attempted aggravated sex trafficking and to misdemeanor sex trafficking. The charges included forcing a woman to engage in prostitution to repay a debt for Suboxone. She was placed on deferred disposition for 18 months. She was also sentenced to five months’ imprisonment.

**April 8, 2015:** Frederick Horne Sr., 47, was sentenced in Kennebec County Superior Court to five months in jail after he pled no contest to sex trafficking and drug charges. Justice Robert Mullen continued the drug cases, placing Horne on an 18-month deferred disposition.

Maryland

**April 14, 2015:** Travon Anthony, 34, pled guilty to human trafficking and was sentenced to five years in prison. Maryland State Police received a tip from a victim’s family that she was being held against her will. (Editor’s note: Unfortunately, no hyperlink is available.)

**April 13, 2015:** Prince George’s County Police Department issued a warrant for 21-year old Brittany Nicole Blanken on human trafficking charges. She was found in a neighboring jurisdiction and arrested.

**April 3, 2015:** Officers from the Baltimore Police Department rescued a 17-year old after she had been reported missing. She was found with Jimmie Junior Rogers II, 27, who was arrested and charged with human trafficking of a minor.
Minnesota

April 17, 2015: In April, the South Central Drug Investigation Unit conducted a human trafficking sting operation. The investigation led to the arrest of eight individuals who are facing formal complaint charges related to solicitation of prostitution. Earlier operations resulted in the arrest and charge of 12 other individuals.

April 15, 2015: A 54-year old man and a 42-year old were charged in Ramsey County Court with one felony count of engaging in prostitution with a minor. The victim in these cases was 17.

New Jersey

April 15, 2015: The Fort Lee Police Department uncovered a prostitution and human trafficking ring when an alert police officer noticed a suspicious vehicle parked near a motel. Later investigation determined that Yadir Araujo and John Gaudin allegedly recruited two teen girls to work for them as prostitutes. Police also recovered cell phones and computers that were evidently used to run an illegal credit card fraud operation. Another man was arrested who had paid to have sex with one of the girls.

April 8, 2015: Somerset County prosecutors have announced that 29-year-old Paul Monteiro of Providence, Rhode Island, faces kidnapping and human trafficking charges in relation to a teenager found with him in a local hotel. An investigation revealed that Monteiro had brought the girl from Rhode Island to New Jersey.

North Carolina

April 23, 2015: The Cumberland County Sheriff’s Office has charged two people with human trafficking. Since the investigation is ongoing, no further information was released.

April 22, 2015: A 27-year old woman from Parkton has been accused of being the broker between prostitutes and her pimp. She was arrested by the Cumberland County Sheriff’s Office and is facing four felony counts each of human trafficking, promoting prostitution for a profit, and felony conspiracy.

North Dakota

April 20, 2015: A man wanted for involvement in human trafficking in North Dakota has been arrested in Las Vegas and is expected to be extradited, according to the Minot Police Department.

April 9, 2015: Twenty-year old Tayari Meadows from Las Vegas was arrested by Minot police when they pretended to arrange a sexual encounter online. Police were alerted by a 14-year old’s mother that her daughter was being advertised on a website. Meadows is accused of trafficking the girl.
Ohio

April 24, 2015: Dayton’s Regional Sex Trade Organized Response Unit (R-STORM) arrested four individuals suspected of being involved in sex trafficking. Two of those arrested are believed to be the traffickers and two, including an Air Force sergeant, are charged with soliciting.

April 22, 2015: A Reynoldsburg couple has been indicted on one count each of human trafficking, two counts of extortion, and various other felony charges. Three women were victimized by responding to a fake profile that was posted on meetme.com. The women thought they were corresponding with a serviceman stationed overseas and, as the women became more involved with the online relationship, they were asked to visit the serviceman’s friend, who turned out to be Thomas M. Williamson. At least one of the victims was treated as a virtual slave, requiring her to do housework and not allowing her to leave the house. His companion, Michelle N. Feldman, has also been charged.

April 22, 2015: During a recent human trafficking enforcement operation conducted by the Wood County Sheriff’s Office, nine men were arrested and charged with solicitation of prostitution.

South Carolina

April 1, 2015: The Spartanburg County Sheriff’s Office has made seven arrests resulting from a human trafficking investigation. Four victims have been recovered.

Tennessee

April 24, 2015: In the first case in Tennessee where a customer of sex trafficking has been prosecuted under the state’s human trafficking law, Michael Kohlmeyer was sentenced to 22 years in prison for trafficking a person under the age of 15. He wanted to buys girls “just over 8, not over 16.” Kohlmeyer's conversation was initially with a prostitute who tipped off police when he indicated a desire for young girls. Kohlmeyer was out on bail in a similar case in another county. He was later convicted in that case.

April 22, 2015: Campbell County investigators and LaFolette police officers arrested 60-year old Alonzo Adam Branson and charged him with human trafficking. He allegedly tried to lure children to his home for sex in exchange for drugs.

Texas

April 21, 2015: A Lubbock County grand jury indicted two men on human trafficking charges. They were earlier indicted on charges of aggravated promotion of prostitution of a person less than 18 years of age. The new charges came after investigators found a second victim.

April 18, 2015: Dallas police were in the middle of a narcotics operation when they noticed a young girl inside a car with two older individuals and another man standing
outside the car at a Motel 6. The child was identified as a 14-year-old girl who had run away from Houston. The three adults with her have been charged with Compelling Prostitution of a Child and Trafficking in Persons/Child.

**Articles of General Interest**

Authorities have reported that over 4,000 foreign labor trafficking victims have been abandoned on remote Indonesian islands by boat captains after the Indian government issued a moratorium on foreign vessels in Indonesian waters. Thailand has come under fire recently after revelations of massive labor trafficking occurring in the Thai fishing industries. Thai officials have found 26 bodies of presumed victims of human trafficking in a mass grave deep in the southern Thai jungle. They are all believed to be migrants from Myanmar and Bangladesh. Authorities found three survivors at a nearby camp, two of them children.

The *New York Post* published an article about the erotic massage parlor industry in New York.

*NPR* featured a program on the seamy side of recruiting young teen-agers from foreign countries to play basketball. The Department of Homeland Security raided the Faith Baptist Christian Academy South and discovered 30 young boys, mostly Dominican, who were sleeping on the floor in the campus gym. These young men had been recruited with the promise of a high school education and a chance at a college scholarship.

With Louisville expecting a large influx of people coming for Derby Week, the nonprofit Free2Hope teamed up with local churches to raise awareness of human trafficking. They asked businesses close to Kentucky Downs to post information about human trafficking in their windows.

In *Michigan*, a first of its kind Human Trafficking Specialty Court has been established in Washtenaw County. Operating since March 2014, the court attempts to assess those who have been caught up in crimes such as prostitution, give them probation, and refer them to appropriate care and treatment.

*Colorado Springs, Colorado*, officials have announced that they will release names and photos of johns they have arrested to the media. A study showed that 87% of johns would not solicit sex if they knew their names and faces would be publicized. It is hoped that this new program will help to deter human trafficking in the city.

The *Urban Institute* published an October 2014 research report, titled “Understanding the Organization, Operation, and Victimization Process of Labor Trafficking in the United States.”

The Spring 2015 issue of *American Criminal Law Review* included an article on decriminalizing victims of sex trafficking.
The *Washington Post* published an article which discussed the varying estimates on the number of victims of human trafficking.