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.

December 2015

Federal Legislative Activity

H.R. 515, which passed the House the end of January, has been reported out of the Senate’s Committee on Foreign Relations. Titled the International Megan’s Law to Prevent Demand for Child Sex Trafficking, it is designed to create a methodology to notify other governments when known U.S. child sex offenders have planned to travel overseas as well as provide notification to states and others when it becomes known that child sex offenders from other countries intend to travel to the United States.

State Investigations/Arrests/Prosecutions

Alaska

Nov. 4, 2015: Alaska State Troopers led a six-month investigation into street-level prostitution which led to the arrest of a Fairbanks man on sexual assault and sex trafficking charges.

California

Nov. 23, 2015: California’s human trafficking statute includes a section that states a person is guilty of trafficking if he violates another’s personal liberty with the intent to effect a violation of a specific crime, including child pornography and extortion. Tuolumne County District Attorney Laura Kreig used this section of the law to prosecute 35-year-old Daniel Leon Clifton who subsequently pled guilty and was sentenced to 21 years and four months in prison. He carried on a sexual relationship with a teen, beginning when she was 15, and then used an anonymous threat to get her to send explicit photos of herself. When he began to demand nude pictures of her eight-year-old sister and other pornographic photos, she finally reported the situation.
Nov. 18, 2015: After a four-month investigation, the Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Office arrested three individuals and charged them with human trafficking and wage theft. The officers executed search warrants at three locations: a restaurant, a salon, and a home in San Jose. Three women and three men, the alleged victims, were recovered. They had originally come from Spain on vacation.

Nov. 11, 2015: The Monterey County Sheriff’s Office conducted a three-month investigation into a ring of suspects believed to be illegally smuggling women from El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mexico, and other Central American countries into the United States and forcing them into prostitution in order to pay off the cost of getting them into the country. Eight individuals were arrested. Officials also seized illegal firearms and thousands of dollars of U.S. currency.

Illinois

Nov. 16, 2015: According to the DuPage County state’s attorney’s office, Demarcus Feltus pled guilty to involuntary servitude of a minor and was sentenced to 10 years’ imprisonment for trafficking two 15-year old girls. He was arrested when undercover officers answered an ad for “two sexy females.” Laburron Jackson, who was arrested with Feltus, is still in jail awaiting trial.

Indiana

Nov. 15, 2015: The Indiana Department of Child Services reported that a juvenile was suffering from various injuries and requested investigation by the Fishers Police Department. A subsequent search of a home owned by Lonny Jordan Hatland and information from the juvenile led to Hartland’s arrest on charges that he coerced the victim into having sex with other men. On his arrest, Hartland was immediately removed from his 20-year position as a reserve officer with the Muncie Police Department.

Kansas

Nov. 13, 2015: A mother in Wichita contacted police after she found a social media conversation between a 22-year old man and her 16-year old daughter. A subsequent police investigation revealed information that led investigators to believe that the man was intending to exploit her. Jesse Duckens, 22, was arrested on human trafficking and other charges.

Nov. 9, 2015: Wichita police arrested two men on suspicion of sex trafficking. Two sisters, 15 and 16 years of age who had run away, were walking when they were approached by a man offering them a job. When they accepted, he pulled a gun and demanded sex. He took them to a house and he and another man threatened and sexually assaulted both girls. The younger child was able to escape, ran to a neighbor’s house, and called police.
Maryland

Nov. 17, 2015: Howard County police announced that they arrested two men and a woman who allegedly forced women into prostitution. Detectives began an investigation in September into a series of similar ads for up to 12 different women on Backpage.com that used the name X-Factor in the title. A tip from a witness at the TA Truck Stop in Jessup led detectives to find one of the women advertised. Subsequent investigation led to the arrest of Donald Williams, Tiffany Lowery, and Rashon Pratt on human trafficking charges. The defendants were allegedly being provided drugs to the women to keep them high and using other coercive tactics. Six victims in their 20s and 30s were located and provided assistance.

Nov. 10, 2015: Following a month-long undercover investigation by Howard County police, two Virginia men have been charged with human trafficking and prostitution. James Warhurst of Manassas contacted an undercover agent through social media, offering her a job as an escort. He continued the conversation over several weeks and offered a similar job to a friend and arranged to pick them up in Laurel and take them back to Virginia. A second man, Ali Reza Rohanimanesh, was with Warhurst with the arranged meeting occurred.

Massachusetts

Nov. 23, 2015: A Brockton man, Shakwaan Simpkins, has been charged with trafficking of a person for sexual servitude after Burlington police said he tried to recruit an undercover police officer posing as a prostitute during a sting operation to work for him. The sting operation also led to the arrests of eight other men who had responded to an ad placed by the police.

Nov. 3, 2015: Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey announced that a Dorchester man, Shaun Leoney, 33, pled guilty to charges involving human trafficking. He was sentenced to seven years and one day in state prison and five years’ probation on release. Leoney’s brother, Michael, is also charged with human trafficking offenses.

Minnesota

Nov. 23, 2015: A domestic disturbance call has led to charges against 40-year old Damon DiMartino involving the sex trafficking of a minor. Washington County Attorney Pete Orput has instituted a comprehensive plan organizing law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and victim advocates to work together to more effectively investigate and prosecute sex traffickers.

Oct. 30, 2015: The final defendant to be sentenced in a St. Paul sex trafficking ring, Suwan Dominique Cross, 20, will spend nine years’ in prison with credit given for her 240 days already served. She had pled guilty in July to three felony trafficking charges, two of which involved the trafficking of a minor.
**Mississippi**

**Nov. 18, 2015:** Jackson County District Attorney Tony Lawrence announced that, after a year-long investigation, authorities arrested two individuals associated with a spa operation in St. Martin on trafficking charges.

**Nov. 14, 2015:** Monica Vaughn, 41, was arrested for forcing another woman to have sex with men in exchange for drugs. The Lauderdale County Sheriff’s Office also arrested four other men in connection with the case. They have been charged with rape, sexual battery, and, in one case, murder.

**Oct. 31, 2015:** Three Gulf Coast residents were arrested by Biloxi Police and charged with human trafficking of a juvenile.

**Nebraska**

**Oct. 31, 2015:** Omaha police vice unit detectives arrested 44-year old Anthony Swindle and charged him with two counts of first-degree sexual assault of a child, one count of sex trafficking of a minor, and as a felon in possession of a firearm. The young victim was advertised on an online website.

**Nevada**

**Nov. 21, 2015:** A Las Vegas rapper, Danny Flores, and his life-in girlfriend have been arrested on charges of pimping at a 15-year old who was the live-in lover of the two defendants. She allegedly was forced to look for potential customers inside Vegas casinos and through walking on the Los Vegas Strip.

**New Hampshire**

**Nov. 23, 2015:** In Merrimack County, William Shine, 34, has been sentenced to 15 years in prison on his conviction for sex trafficking a minor. He tried to sell a 14-year old girl to a 26-year old man; however, the intended buyer was actually an undercover police informant.

**Nov. 22, 2015:** In a hearing in the 9th Circuit Court in Manchester, a police prosecutor recounted that Donald Kaplan allegedly used force to sexually assault a woman and then, by controlling access to heroin, food, and clothing, forced her to perform commercial sex acts. He will face a preliminary hearing in early December.

**North Carolina**

**Nov. 20, 2015:** Two men have been charged with human trafficking of a minor and promoting prostitution in Fayetteville. The Raleigh Police Department alerted the Cumberland County Sheriff’s Office about online postings for a minor female. The ad made
the female victim available for “dates” in both Cumberland and Wake counties. Authorities filed charges against Deshaun Fahie, 21, and William Hardy, 22.

**North Dakota**

**Nov. 17, 2015:** District Court Judge Todd Cresap has refused to throw out evidence collected after police, searching for a missing child from Las Vegas, entered a motel room without a search warrant. In the trial of Tayari Meadows for trafficking a 14-year old girl, the defense had argued that the subsequent search and questioning were unconstitutional. However, the judge agreed with prosecutors that, once the officers observed the child inside the room, an emergency situation existed and officers were within their right to immediately enter the room to remove the child from further harm.

**Pennsylvania**

**November 4, 2015:** Issac B. Pearson, already in jail on charges that he stole a car and on pimping charges, has now also been charged with human trafficking. In this case, according to Allentown police detectives, two women were found at a local hotel. One of the women claimed that he had become physically abusive two her.

**Rhode Island**

**Nov. 5, 2015:** In East Providence, a teen-ager has been sentenced for his role in forcing underage girls into prostitution. Brian Desmaris, 18, pled no contest to two counts of sex trafficking of a minor and one count of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of a minor. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison with 19 months and two days to serve.

**Texas**

**Nov. 30, 2015:** Dallas police charged Joe Vasquero Torres, 24, with sexual assault of a child, sex trafficking of a child, and assorted other felonies after they found him in a stolen pickup truck with a 16-year old girl. The teen stated that he dropped her off at a house to have sex for money.

**Nov. 17, 2015:** A Craigslist ad led to the arrest of a Wisconsin man, Andrew J. Turley, in Huston on one count of child sex trafficking and one count of compelling a child under 18 into prostitution. According to the Dane County Sheriff’s Office, an investigator saw an ad under the “casual encounters” section advertising “play” with a little girl. Text messages were exchanged between the investigator and the poster of the ad detailing explicit sex acts that were contemplated. A meeting was arranged and, when the officer arrived, he was taken to a room where a 4-year old child was lying in bed, groggy from medications that had been administered to her.

**November 16, 2015:** Two men are facing human trafficking charges after one met a 16-year old girl online, raped her, and sent her to Alabama by bus to Jason Daniel Strickland, 32. Cuauhtemoc Munoz, 43, met the teen on social media. Pretending to be a 17-year old,
he offered to help her run away from home. Dallas Police allege that he took her to a hotel, sexually assaulted her, and then put her on a bus. Strickland was arrested in Loveland, Colorado. The girl was found and returned to her home.

Nov. 7, 2015: Montgomery County investigators arrested four people for participating in a human trafficking ring and luring Chinese women into prostitution. Officials believe that the crime ring extends overseas and that the women entered the country cities like New York and Los Angeles and then were brought to the Houston area. Eight victims have been located.

Oct. 30, 2015: Dallas police have arrested three men who were involved in an alleged trafficking scheme involving a teen-age boy. One of the men, Matthew Bourasa, allegedly impersonated a police officer and pretended to arrest the teen for prostitution. Another man, Kourtlyn Turpin, also posed as a police officer. According to the police, the men told the boy they wouldn’t charge him if he agreed to live with them. They then trafficked the child for sex. The third defendant, Taylor Uresti, is alleged to have sold the boy to Bourasa.

Virginia

Nov. 23, 2015: A woman from Pennsylvania, 22-year old Elizabeth Calederone, has been charged with sex trafficking of a minor and related crimes. She was arrested by Henrico police officers.

Nov. 17, 2015: Chesterfield County police arrested 27-year old Jamil O. Ahmad. Ahmad is accused having taken two people from the Hampton Roads area to Chesterfield County to prostitute them through on-line ads. One of the victims is 17.

Wisconsin

Nov. 27, 2015: An undercover Oshkosh police detective, investigating incidents of prostitution, responded to an ad published on Backpage.com. He met with Lana L. Morgan who said she was 21. When police tried to arrest her, she fought back, kicking and trying to get away. Although she initially refused to identify herself, she finally admitted that she was 17. Other officers arrested Jalessa K. Hill, 21, who was sitting in the vehicle Morgan had gotten out of. Hill has been charged with child sex trafficking. Morgan has been charged with resisting an officer and prostitution.

Nov. 26, 2015: Teng Thao, 24, of Clifton, has been charged with one count of child trafficking for his role in facilitating a prostitution ring that operated in Sheboygan in early 2013.
Other News of Interest

Maine Governor Paul LePage held a summit on human trafficking and called on Maine legislators to approve money to hire more prosecutors, judges, and drug enforcement agents to assist with prosecuting drug offenders who are often tied to human trafficking. In the first report assessing the problem of human trafficking in Maine, released by the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault in partnership with Hornby Zeller Associates, estimated that “the most conservative estimates from the 2015 Needs Assessment suggest the annual number of human trafficking and sexual exploitation cases is likely to be between 200 and 300.” That estimate did not include labor trafficking.

Homeland Security Investigations officials arrested 29 individuals in 13 cities and eight states in early November on sex trafficking and related charges. Nine suspects remain at large. The operation targeted a network of illegal brothels trafficking Hispanic females.

Mexican and U.S. authorities have arrested eight individuals that were involved in a human trafficking ring that forced women and underage girls into prostitution. The ring was run by four families and based mainly in Mexico’s Tlaxcala state and New York.

A new law was passed in Michigan last year requiring all health professions in the state to train on identifying potential human trafficking victims. To fulfill this requirement for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, a pharmacy student has developed an on-line, self-study module to provide information regarding human trafficking, its venues, and whom it affects.

An article in the Christian Science Monitor discussed three tech solutions that are working to defeat human trafficking, including the DARPA-introduced Memex software.

The Indiana Youth Services Association was recently granted $750,000 to bring the Safe Place Program to Indiana. The program allows various organizations throughout a community to be identified safe place sites where youth who are being sexually exploited might go for help.

Nestle has admitted that it found evidence of labor trafficking and child labor in its Thai supply chain.

A child sex trafficking survivor visited with Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes and shared his story of the abuses he received from the time he was five.