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.

November 2015

News from AG Offices

Florida’s 2015 Statewide Human Trafficking Summit was attended by more than 700 individuals representing law enforcement, prosecutors, service providers, community members, and educators. Attorney General Pam Bondi presented awards to several Floridians to honor their exemplary contributions in the fight against human trafficking, including to Diane Checchio, an Assistant Statewide Prosecutor for the Attorney General’s Office.

Georgia Attorney General Sam Olens announced that Khiry Price, 23, pled guilty in Cobb County Superior Court to human trafficking; he was sentenced to 50 years, to serve 30 years. The case was prosecuted by Cobb County Assistant District Attorney Chuck Boring and Assistant Attorney General Camila Wright. Price enticed three girls, ages 14, 15, and 16, to prostitute themselves. Price pled guilty to 16 counts, including three counts of trafficking a person for sexual servitude.

A lawsuit, which had been dismissed in May by the federal district court in Massachusetts brought by three women, who had been prostituted as minors, against the website, Backpage.com has been appealed. Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Healey filed an amicus brief, urging the First Circuit Court of Appeals to reverse the district court’s decision.

The indictments of three men from New Jersey and another from South Carolina on human trafficking charges involving a 14-year-old girl was announced by Acting New Jersey Attorney General John Hoffman. The men also face conspiracy, child endangerment, and numerous other counts in the indictment handed up by a state grand jury.

The Office of Justice Programs at the U.S. Department of Justice announced the award of a $600,000 grant to the office of Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson to support and
enhance human trafficking task forces and support the AG’s recently announced human trafficking plan. The office will be working with the Salvation Army, who also received a grant, to investigate and prosecute sex and labor trafficking cases and address the needs of victims.

**New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman** announced that his office has entered into a partnership with Facebook to use innovative data and analytical methods to address human trafficking. The initiative will primarily focus on child victims of sex trafficking. Facebook will work with the New York AGO to develop algorithms to identify evidence of trafficking on online advertisements.

**New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas** announced the arrest of Jeremy Bowerman, 36, in an investigation into human trafficking. It is alleged that Bowerman agreed to pay $30 to engage in various sexual acts with a 10-year-old girl. **General Balderas** also announced that the state had received a $1.5 million grant from the Department of Justice to combat human trafficking in New Mexico.

**Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine** announced that two sisters, owners of several massage parlors in central Ohio, were sentenced to ten years in prison after being convicted on human trafficking charges. Task force investigators from the Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force, part of the attorney general’s Organized Crime Investigations Commission, initiated the investigation into the parlors after tips from the community. Search warrants executed at the three businesses and the sisters’ apartment found that the defendants recruited women who were native to China, could not speak English, and had no ties to central Ohio.

**South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson** announced the first human trafficking convictions in South Carolina. Colin Hernandez Mendez and Denicia Alfaro Lleydi were sentenced to 12 years in prison. The victim, a recent widow, moved to Greenville with her son with the understanding that she would be working at a flea market with Mendez and Lleydi. She originally lived with her cousin but moved in with Mendez and Lleydi after the cousin returned to Mexico. After a couple of weeks, the defendants told her she would have to start sleeping with men in order to make them money and threatened the life of her 2-year-old son when she refused. After five months, she was able to escape.

**South Dakota Attorney General and NAAG president Marty Jackley** announced the arrest of 34-year-old Joseph Raleigh of Miller. He has been charged with one count of attempted commercial sex trafficking of a minor after he allegedly answered an advertisement placed by a law enforcement task force. The arrest was the result of a weekend joint operation among state, federal, and local officials in the Pierre area.

At the end of October, a large Formula 1 racing event was held in Austin. In connection with the event and partnering with the Austin Police Human Trafficking unit, **Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton’s** Human Trafficking unit ran an undercover operation which resulted in the arrest of 35 individual on various solicitation and prostitution charges. One of those
arrested for solicitation was presumably part of local efforts to help human trafficking victims.

Funded by a grant from the U.S. State Department, Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich, Colorado Attorney General Cynthia Coffman, Kansas Attorney General (and co-chair of the NAAG Human Trafficking Committee) Derek Schmidt, New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas, Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Kilmartin, and Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes traveled to Mexico City to meet with top Mexican prosecutors. The aim of the meeting was to bolster cooperation in jointly targeting human trafficking and money laundering crimes by improving information sharing among law enforcement agencies in both countries as well as increasing training for prosecutors in handling these cases.

Federal Legislative Activity

S. 1446, the SOAR to Health and Wellness Act, would require the health care system to beef up its activities in addressing human trafficking. It was introduced in May but has not yet been taken up by the Health Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

H.R. 3694 was introduced in October. Its purpose is to combat trafficking in human organs. It would include organ trafficking in the definition of human trafficking under the TVPA when payment is involved.

State Legislative Activity

California Governor Jerry Brown signed AB 15 into law. The new law extends the statute of limitations for a victim of human trafficking to file a civil suit against his or her trafficker.

In the Courts: Federal

In an unpublished decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit affirmed the conviction and sentencing of Jeremy Mack. After a jury trial, he was sentenced to life on charges that included conspiracy to commit sex trafficking, sex trafficking of a minor, and drug trafficking. The facts of the case are illustrative of the coercive nature of drug addiction and the withholding of drugs by a trafficker. In this case, Mack provided drugs to women that they understood were free and then insisted that they had incurred a large debt and had to pay that debt back by prostituting themselves. Refusal meant Mack would withhold the drugs. United States v. Jeremy A. Mack, No. 14-3580 (Oct. 16, 2015), 2015 U.S. app. LEXIS 18018.

State Investigations/Arrests/Prosecutions

Alabama

Oct. 10, 2015: Tusculum Police were notified by the family members of a 14-year old that she was missing. About the same time, they received a call about an underage girl being
used as a prostitute inside an apartment complex. Police arrested Rashard Ricks, 26, and charged him with human trafficking. Jerrin Donley, 21, was charged with rape and Dashia Simmons, 19, was charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Arizona

Oct. 23, 2015: The Phoenix Police Department arrested Andrienne Wilson on one count of management of child prostitution and one count of sex trafficking. The arrest followed an investigation of a missing teen from Scottsdale who had left a voicemail message for her father from a restricted phone. Police were able to trace the phone, located an apartment, found advertisements on Backpage.com, and established surveillance, eventually locating the victim.

California

Oct. 29, 2015: Pittsburg police have charged an East Bay rapper, Joshua Durham, whose stage name of Five Hunnet, with two counts of human trafficking of a minor and numerous other charges, including furnishing drugs to a minor to keep her under control.

Oct. 19, 2015: Tryvell Powell, 34, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for sex trafficking of a minor. He used Facebook to lure a 16-year-old girl from her home in Modesto to Fresno where she engaged in prostitution, turning her money over to Powell.

Oct. 7, 2015: The San Bernardino County District Attorney’s Office obtained the conviction of Isiah Mincey, 31, of Lake Charles, Louisiana on ten charges, including pimping, pandering, false imprisonment by violence, assault, and human trafficking. He brought a 17-year-old from Louisiana to California to provide prostitution services. A truck driver in Ontario spotted her and called police. There were indications that she had been severely beaten. When police located the victim, Mincey was not there, but he was found later with another 18-year-old whom he was prostituting. He faces up to 15 years in prison when sentenced.

Colorado

Oct. 14, 2015: A Lakewood mother has been charged with human trafficking of a minor, her 12-year-old daughter, for sexual servitude, pimping of a child, and sexual assault of a child. In return for turning a blind eye to the sexual relationship between Australian Thomas Keski and her daughter, the mother received $10,000 from Keski to pay bills.

Oct. 5, 2015: After over two days of deliberations, a Weld District Court jury acquitted Kalil Fergon on human trafficking and pandering charges. Although an 18-year-old victim testified that Fergon forced her to prostitute herself against her will and that she turned over all money earned to him, the defense alleged that Fergon was more of an uninvolved bystander who was heavily into marijuana and, although he had met the victim, was not involved in posting ads or pimping. The jury deadlocked on the pimping charge; he will be retried in December.
Oct. 1, 2015: Sean Crumpler, 48, is facing a dozen counts of sex trafficking and one count of having sex without informing his partner he was HIV-positive. Crumpler is alleged to have lured young, gay runaways he met on the social media app Grindr. Crumpler's house in Aurora housed up to a dozen males who lived rent free in exchange for sex with Crumpler. He is accused of having his victims tattoo his name “Sean” on their arms along with a bird that matched an engraved bird on a stone entrance leading to his neighborhood.

Sep. 29, 2015: According to Mesa County Chief Deputy District Attorney Dan Rubinstein, an on-going human trafficking investigation has revealed as many as 25 victims that were lured by Kevin Renfro to be photographed nude. Two new counts of class 2 felonies involving human trafficking are among the five new felony charges filed against Renfro.

Georgia

Oct. 26, 2015: Hall County Magistrate Court Judge Tracy Loggins, citing the limited case law on the state human trafficking statute, dropped a human trafficking charge for two men implicated in an undercover prostitution sting. The charges were reduced to electronic enticement of a minor. The allegations against Clifford Nash, 37, and Aaron Boone, 32, were that the two men offered money to engage in sexual activity with a person they thought was 14.

Illinois


Kansas

Oct. 14, 2015: Chen Li, 51, reached a plea deal with the Douglas County Attorney’s office and pled no contest to attempted human trafficking and promoting the sale of sexual services at a massage parlor.

Massachusetts

Oct. 9, 2015: A private social worker was arraigned on charges of human trafficking and child pornography in Woburn District Court. According to District Attorney Marian Ryan, Rick Hall is accused of attempting to entice three 15-year-old Oregon girls to send him nude pictures of themselves in return for a payment. Hall is the owner of North Shore Recovery Management.

Oct. 2, 2015: An investigation that began in August of 2015 has led to the indictments of six people involved with massage parlors on sex trafficking charges. According to Plymouth District Attorney Timothy Cruz, his office was assisted in the investigation by Plymouth police, the U.S. State Department, and the Massachusetts Division of Professional Licensure.
Minnesota

Sep. 29, 2015: Minneapolis Police Department officials conducted an undercover sting in Dakota County in September that led to felony charges against six men for trying to pay for sex with underage girls.

Mississippi

Oct. 9, 2015: Randy Alan Griffin, 51, of Lauderdale has been sentenced to 15 years in prison, with eight suspended, after pleading guilty to propositioning a juvenile for sex over the Internet.

Nevada

Sep. 29, 2015: The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police are working with the FBI in a joint investigation of Lewis Frank Carr for involvement in running a prostitution ring in Las Vegas. Carr was arrested for the crimes of sex trafficking, pandering, and accepting and receiving earnings of a prostitute. Evidence indicates that there are more victims that have not yet been found.

Sep. 25, 2015: Las Vegas Metropolitan Police reported that Andrew DeWayne Carter, 20, who was already in custody at the Clark County Detention Center, has been charged with sex trafficking a minor under 14 years old, first-degree kidnapping, child abuse or neglect, and accepting the earnings of the prostitute. The victim’s grandmother contacted Houston, Texas, police and told them she might be in Las Vegas.

New Hampshire

Sep. 25, 2015: In Concord, a Merrimack County jury convicted William Shire after a 4-day trial. The jury deliberated for 30 minutes before returning a guilty verdict on all four counts of sex trafficking, attempted sex trafficking, conspiracy to commit sex trafficking and endangering the welfare of a child. Shine’s wife has also been charged with sex trafficking.

New Jersey

Oct. 16, 2015: South Hackensack police who answered an online advertisement offering sex for sale found a 17-year-old girl and a woman who had just turned 18, both of whom are being treated as victims. Ricky James, 32, of Newark was arrested and charged with four counts, including two counts of first-degree human trafficking and one-count of second-degree promoting prostitution of a juvenile. He has previously been convicted on theft, forgery, and weapons charges in Middlesex County and on theft charges in Union and Sussex counties.
New York

Oct. 9, 2015: A Gates undercover officer found two girls, ages 16 and 17, at a motel in Gates who had been advertised online throughout the East Coast. One teen was arrested and the other was sent to the Center for Youth for help.

Oct. 8, 2015: A third person has been indicted for forcing immigrant women into performing sex acts on customers at a Long Island massage parlor. The owners of the parlor were arrested in September. According to the indictment, two workers responded to help wanted ads in Chinese-language newspapers. When they were hired, they were forced to sexually serve men who came into the parlor as well as sleep at the business.

North Dakota

Oct. 15, 2016: Antoine Dotson, 23, from Tucson, Arizona, pled guilty to human trafficking, gross sexual imposition, and aggravated assault charges in a plea agreement with local prosecutors and was sentenced to ten years’ imprisonment. Court documents indicate that Dotson brought a girl from Arizona to a Minot hotel and advertised her on Backpage.com. He forced the girl to have sex with him and beat her when she refused to participate in prostitution.

Ohio

Oct. 16, 2015: Isaiah Harris, 34, of Cleveland interrupted his trial to plead guilty to forcing women into prostitution by getting them hooked on drugs. According to Assistant Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Melissa Riley, he has been sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Pennsylvania

Oct. 5, 2015: Stroudsburg detectives arrested two people, Eric Rolle and Nefertari Rouse, and charged them with human trafficking offenses. Rolle allegedly advertised two women for sale on Backpage.com. Because he had been convicted of a similar crime earlier, it is alleged that Rolle had his girl-friend, Rouse, book hotel rooms in her name to use for the women to meet their dates.

Tennessee

Oct. 17, 2015: State and local authorities in Chattanooga conducted a human trafficking operation called “Operation Someone Like Me.” Police arrested 20 men during the operation who were charged on prostitution-related offenses.
Wisconsin

Oct. 7, 2015: Michael Conners, 18, of Milwaukee was sentenced to 12 months’ incarceration by Judge Eugene Gasiorkiewicz, Racine County circuit court, for setting up transportation for two girls, ages 13 and 16, to travel to Racine to engage in prostitution. He was originally charged with human trafficking, but pled guilty to being a party to the crime of pandering.

Articles of General Interest

The FBI announced that a nationwide human trafficking operation that occurred in early October led to the recovery of 149 underage sex trafficking victims and the arrest of 153 pimps. Now in its ninth year, Operation Cross Country is a national effort spearheaded by the FBI and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children with partners in state and local law enforcement. The youngest victim recovered was 12 years old; three of the victims recovered were male and three were transgender.

The Austin City Council passed a resolution last month that requires the city manager to designate a liaison to local organizations that work to prevent the human trafficking, incorporate education about identifying and preventing human trafficking in Austin for city employees, and formulate a plan and set policies to reduce human trafficking in the city.

In the first study of its kind, research from the institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience at King’s College, London, published in the Lancet, details clinical evidence on the mental health effects of human trafficking. The most prevalent symptoms found were high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression.

In a study funded by the Department of Justice and headed up by Dr. Ami Carpenter, Associate Professor of the University of San Diego’s School of Peace Studies, investigators determined that as many as 11,773 persons become victims of human trafficking in San Diego on a yearly basis. Eighty percent of these victims are U.S. citizens. The study also found that fewer than seven percent of these victims ever come into contact with law enforcement. Gang involvement in the sex trafficking industry was high; the study determined that more than 100 gangs are involved. Recruitment happened in high schools, bus stops, house parties, churches, and malls.