

**Summary
Meeting of the
Commission on the Prevention of
Human Trafficking
Monday, October 20, 2008**

Members present:

Delegate Adam P. Ebbin, Chairman
Delegate H. Morgan Griffith
Delegate Thomas Davis Rust
Delegate Jackson H. Miller
Sister Anne Marie Mack, Bon Secours Health System, Inc.
James R. Bryant, Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police
Dr. Jo Anne Lyon, World Hope International
Steve Witmer, Attorney General's Office
Dr. Karen L. Remley, Department of Health
Anthony Conyers, Jr., Department of Social Services
C. Ray Davenport, Department of Labor and Industry
Lt. Col. H. C. Davis (representing W. Steven Flaherty, Virginia State Police)
Marilyn Harris (representing John W. Marshall, Secretary of Public Safety)

Staff present:

D. Robie Ingram
Jessica D. French
Lori L. Roper

Chairman Adam Ebbin opened the meeting and the members introduced themselves.

Mary C. Burke, PhD., with the Project to End Human Trafficking, gave the first presentation. She said that according to the U.N. Protocol, the definition of human trafficking is "slavery - all acts related to the recruitment, transport, sale or purchase of individuals through force, fraud, or other coercive means for the purpose of economic exploitation." She briefly discussed the U.N. Millennium Development Goals - measurable goals for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women.

Dr. Burke gave an overview of human trafficking. She said it is difficult to assess the actual numbers of humans trafficked, and that the range is between four million to 27 million worldwide. She said it is estimated that 14,000 to 17,000 are trafficked into U.S. each year, and that 70% of those trafficked worldwide are trafficked for sex. She added that 35 states have passed some sort of trafficking laws.

(Note: Dr. Burke's presentation, included on this site, points to incidences in Virginia and potential problem areas in Virginia.)

Dr. Burke made available to the Commission a copy of a notice that is required by law in Texas to be posted in certain establishments that serve alcohol and that alerts readers to the existence of a National Human Trafficking Hotline, a toll-free telephone number.

Delegate Jackson Miller observed that the Texas model might not be wholly applicable to Virginia (the Texas notice is posted only in bars that do not serve food) because Virginia law does not allow the existence of pure bars; food service is required at any establishment that serves alcohol.

Chairman Adam Ebbin said that perhaps such a notice could be used in Virginia in restaurant environments that might have a higher likelihood of trafficking.

Dr. Burke's suggestions for Virginia were:

1. Require training in human trafficking awareness for emergency personnel and law-enforcement personnel.
2. Create statewide and community coalitions.
3. Create law-enforcement and emergency task forces.
4. Raise community awareness.

Dr. Burke briefly described the T-Visa, which is the type of Visa given to victims of human trafficking. It can take a year or more to get and requires that the victim cooperate in the prosecution of the traffickers.

Chairman Ebbin asked who to contact at federal level for possible participation in grant funding. Dr. Burke replied that the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Department of Justice (DOJ) may have grants available.

He also asked which states are successful in identifying trafficking cases. She answered New York, California, Texas, and Florida.

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The next presentation was by Dr. Saltanat Liebert, Assistant Professor, Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University, who began by stating that her expertise is in trafficking originating in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. She said that victims from those areas do not trust law-enforcement.

She said that trafficking in Virginia is severely underreported and that her work focuses on two forms: Domestic servitude (example: foreign diplomats who bring

servants into the USA on A-3 Visas) and Exploitation of migrant workers (example: workers in the seafood processing, agriculture and tobacco industries).

Dr. Liebert said that Virginia is vulnerable in the seafood processing, agriculture, and tobacco industries. She said there also exists trafficking for sexual exploitation, sometimes targeting foreign students who come to the USA for "summer resort jobs." An example is two Russian students who were to come to Virginia Beach by way of Dulles Airport, but who were met by Russians at the airport and were sent to Detroit to work in a strip club.

In response to a question from Delegate Morgan Griffith about how such an incident could occur, Dr. Liebert responded that the students were probably intercepted by traffickers who knew about their arrival, having likely been tipped off by the Russian agency that sent them to the USA.

Commission member Steve Witmer asked how participating foreign students could be tracked since some do not have a designated employer.

Chairman Adam Ebbin said he would like to see some sort of notice to Virginia "authorities" when students are brought into Virginia by a recruiting agency. Dr. Liebert said that the fact that no tracking mechanism exists is a great problem. She said it is a federal student transfer program and should be a federal responsibility, probably a State Department responsibility.

She said that people who enter the country on H1B Visas (highly skilled labor) are not typically trafficking victims. They typically speak the English language and have transferrable skills.

She discussed the three P's of Human Trafficking:

1. Prevention. Sweden outlawed purchase or sale of sexual services but not prostitution, for instance.
Some local law-enforcement agencies (USA) photograph or videotape prostitution "johns."
Some U.S. travel agents identify travelers who may seek illicit sex in foreign locales.
2. Prosecution. We could create anti-trafficking police units (as in Tajikistan).
We could impose higher penalties for exploiting foreign workers than local workers (as in Singapore).
3. Protection. Consider trafficking provisions adopted in the Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings by the

Council of Europe. These provisions include, among others, (i) residence permits, for trafficking victims, that are not tied to cooperation with prosecution, and (ii) a 30-day recovery period for victims to escape the influence of traffickers.

Chairman Adam Ebbin asked the whether the majority of trafficking victims arrive in the U.S. legally or illegally? Dr. Liebert replied that 99% of those from Europe arrive legally, on a plane, but that victims from Central America usually arrive illegally.

Dr. Liebert suggested that the Commission review "action plans" available from other countries.

(Note: Dr. Liebert's presentation is included on this website.)

Activities for the next meeting, November 18, were discussed briefly. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.