

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** President of the United States  
**From:** Allison Reefer  
**Subject:** Human Trafficking in the United States  
**Date:** January 22, 2014

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Human trafficking is identified as one of the top illegal crimes in the world. The problem exists in almost every country, including the United States. Recently you addressed this issue in your speech at the Clinton Global Initiative event in September 2012. Several proposed changes were listed for national policy and combative efforts in regards to this issue. While the 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act addresses many of the gaps present in the current Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), many important changes still need to be made, including passing the 2013 TVPA. In future policy and national efforts against human trafficking, victims of trafficking who are U.S. citizens should be a primary focus in order to fill one of the many gaps that still exist.

## **Domestic Victims**

In early versions of the TVPA, domestic victims were largely neglected in both protection and services. Even now, the primary office that helps victims of trafficking through the TVPA, the Office of Refugee Resettlement through the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, only works with foreign victims of trafficking to provide visas, protection, and victim services. According to a recent study done by Polaris Project, 41 percent of referred sex trafficking cases and 20 percent of referred labor trafficking cases were for domestic victims (Polaris Project); this does not even take into account the un-referred cases, especially sex trafficking cases that appear to be prostitution (see Appendix A). In general, reports usually cite that sex trafficking victims are more likely to be U.S. citizens than are labor trafficking victims.

According to the U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report for 2013, it was only in this past fiscal year that the Department of Justice (DOJ) began to fund anti-trafficking organizations through their Office for Victims of Crime. The office is currently funding five programs, three of which are for "all" victims of human trafficking; however, according to the DOJ website, these programs are primarily, if not only, for minors. The programs are also concentrated on the West Coast, in California, leaving a large gap of services in the East (USDOJ).

Adult U.S. citizens who are victims of human trafficking have very little in the way of services, protection, or provision at the federal level, partially because of the ambiguity of many of the cases. While foreign victims of trafficking and minor victims are often easier to pick out, police often assume that, particularly with sex trafficking, most non-minors who are involved are prostitutes and therefore perpetrators rather than victims. This puts adult victims of trafficking in a situation to assume that law enforcement will not help them; this also makes them less likely to come forward or to act as a witness in a trial for fear of being indicted for their own crimes.

Many of these adult prostitutes also started out as child sex slaves, so regardless of why they are still in the industry, they most likely did not start out there willingly.

Police training is a key part of identifying victims of trafficking, particularly domestic victims (TIP Office). Currently, the FBI works to train law enforcement around the country to recognize the signs and know some of the key locations to look for signs of trafficking (see Appendix B). Unfortunately, the training has been primarily for state law enforcement and law enforcement in large cities. While the cities are key areas to target human trafficking, the rural areas often play an important role as well. Human trafficking can and does exist in rural towns, but more often, these towns supply victims to the traffickers. This means that it is important for small town police to be trained to spot human trafficking as well. This will require increased collaboration between the federal and state governments on this issue, which could have implications for awareness of and services for domestic victims of trafficking.

The keys to helping U.S. citizens who are victims of human trafficking are increased awareness, education, protection, and services. When the next TVPA is evaluated and revised, changes can be made to provide these for both foreign and domestic victims of trafficking within the U.S. by using organizations (both governmental and non-governmental), coalitions, and resources that are already in place.

## **Recommendations**

These provisions for domestic victims can be implemented into the Trafficking Victims Protection Act through expansion of governmental organizations already in existence, collaborating with law enforcement and government officials at the state level, and using NGOs throughout the U.S. as resources for information and services.

In addition to the changes already proposed for the 2013 Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the following policy recommendations should be considered for additional proposed changes or future changes:

- ✓ As proposed for the 2013 TVPA, expand the U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor & Combat Trafficking in Persons to become the Bureau to Monitor and Combat Modern Slavery & Other Forms of Human Trafficking.
  - Increase funding to include programs specifically for the United States for both foreign and domestic victims of trafficking.
- ✓ Build network of law enforcement to implement "train the trainer" programs that will stem from the FBI and reach to small-town local law enforcement groups to increase awareness of human trafficking and ability to identify victims.
- ✓ Partner with and fund NGOs throughout United States to provide services for both child and adult victims of human trafficking
  - Legal services and protection
  - Rehabilitation (both mental and physical; also for drug and alcohol abuse)
  - Skill training and/or education services
  - Therapy

- "Re-establishment" services (to help with housing, jobs, family reintegration, etc.)
- ✓ Use law enforcement and NGOs to develop awareness programs that focus on domestic victims.
  - Information on what to look for, who is at risk
  - Programs for young men on realities of prostitution/sex trafficking
  - Programs for young women on personal safety/prostitution

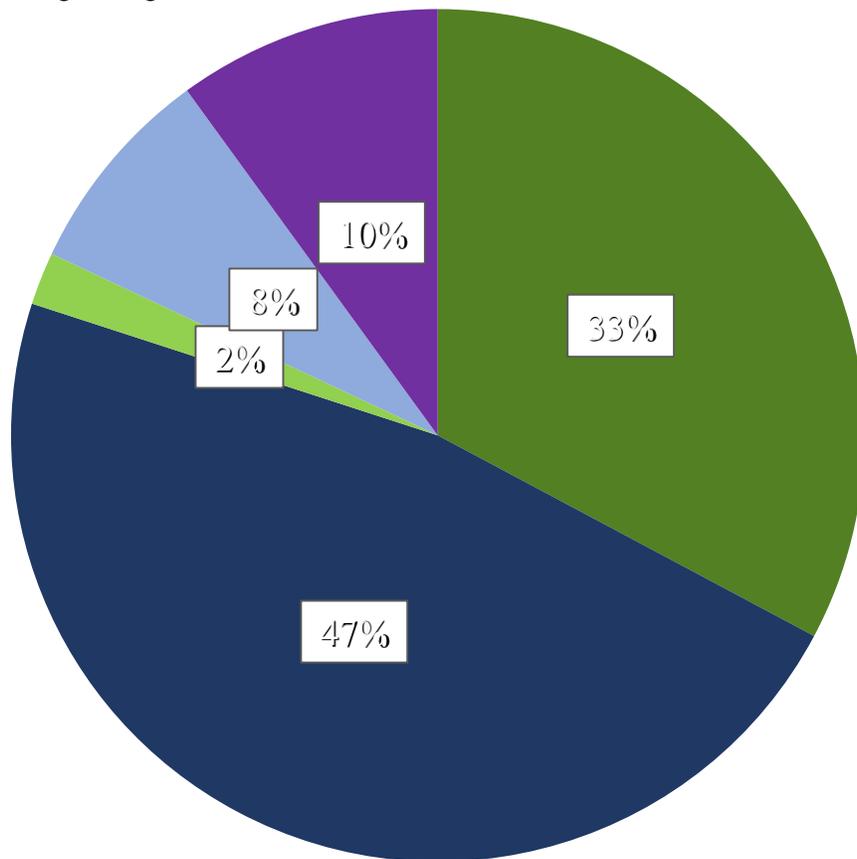
These are just a few of many steps that could be taken to begin to focus on domestic victims of human trafficking in the U.S. specifically through the TVPA. Other policy changes could occur through criminal laws related to pimping, prostitution, and johns. The Violence Against Women Act could play a role in helping U.S. citizen victims of trafficking as well. The state level also has a role to play in combating this issue, and a partnership between national and state government agencies is an ideal way to carry out many of these policies and continue to change state policies. Through your encouragement to Congress and your emphasis on this topic as a priority issue in the United States, those with the authority to make these changes can begin to see the importance and work for change as well.

# U.S. HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATISTICS

Figure I.I.

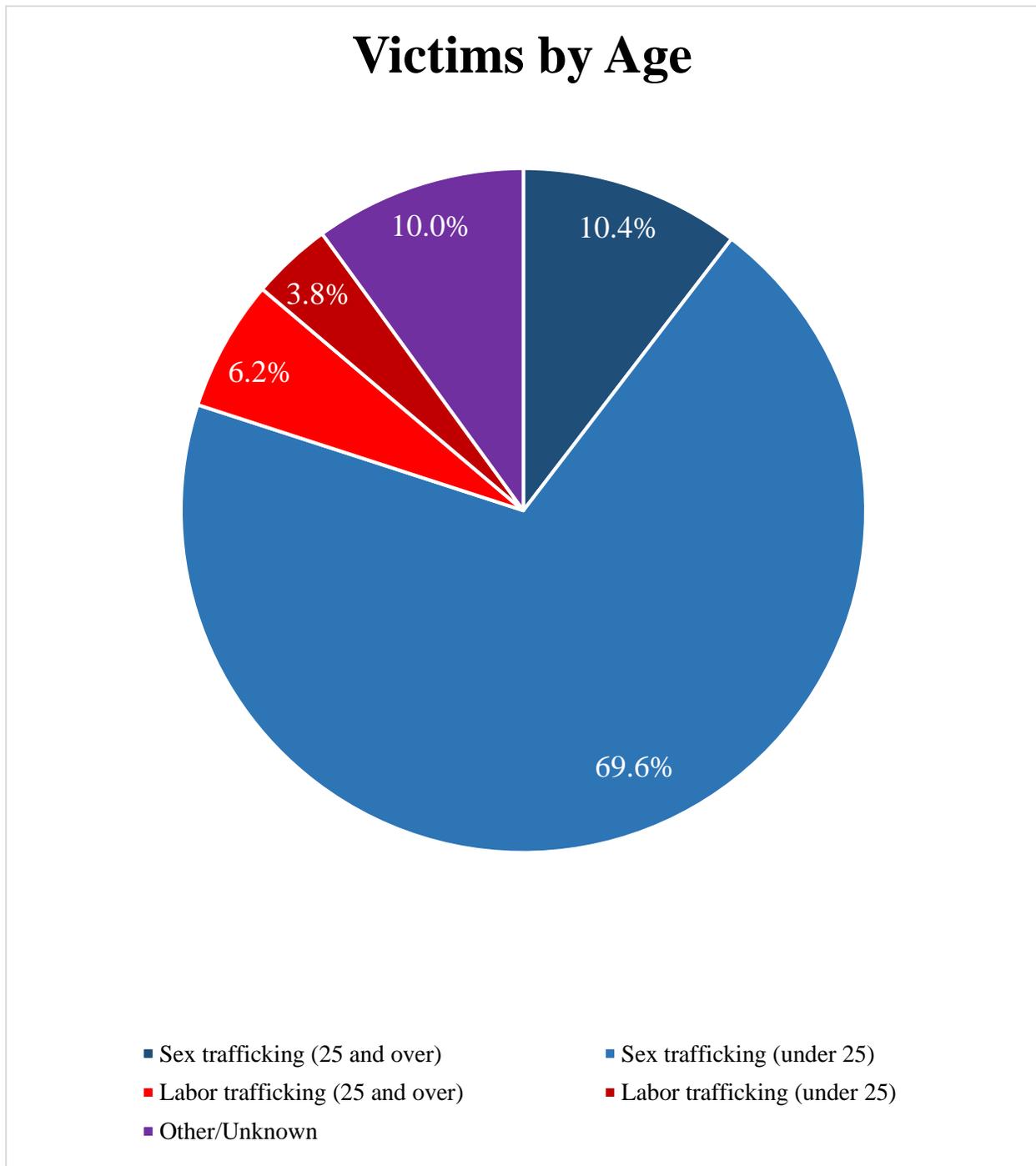
## Victims by Nationality

- Sex trafficking (domestic)
- Sex trafficking (foreign)
- Labor trafficking (domestic)
- Labor trafficking (foreign)
- Other



\*Note: The overall trafficking statistics were based on cases from the Department of Justice in 2011 that stated that about 8 in 10 cases were sex trafficking and 1 in 10 was labor trafficking. The statistics on nationality are from Polaris Project reports published within the last two years.

Figure I.II.



\*Note: The overall trafficking statistics were based on cases from the Department of Justice in 2011 that stated that about 8 in 10 cases were sex trafficking and 1 in 10 was labor trafficking. The statistics on age are from the National Center for Victims of Crime.

Figure I.III.

Chart as Seen on Website for National Center for Victims of Crime:



## APPENDIX B

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Figure II.I.

# COMMON PLACES WHERE HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS FOUND IN THE U.S.

## Sex Trafficking

- Residential brothels
- Hostess clubs
- Escort services
- Fake massage businesses
- Strip clubs
- Street prostitution
- Internet based
- Truck stops

## Labor Trafficking

- Agriculture & farms
- Domestic work/servitude
- Hostess & strip clubs
- Food industry
- Factories
- Peddling & begging
- Hospitality industry

\*Note: This table shows the contrasts between where victims of trafficking are found. Foreign victims are vulnerable to labor trafficking venues, while domestic victims tend to be the ones seen in sex trafficking venues, with the exception of massage parlors.

\*\*Information provided by Polaris Project. Find more at: <http://www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/overview>.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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