

**SEX TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION IN  
AMERICA: CHILD WELFARE'S ROLE IN  
PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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JUNE 11, 2013

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**SEX TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION IN  
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**TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2013**

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE,  
*Washington, DC.*

The hearing was convened, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m., in room SD-215, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Max Baucus (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Wyden, Schumer, Stabenow, Cantwell, Nelson, Cardin, Brown, Casey, Hatch, Thune, Portman, and Toomey.

Also present: Democratic Staff: Amber Cottle, Staff Director; Mac Campbell, General Counsel; David Schwartz, Chief Health Counsel; Diedra Henry-Spires, Professional Staff Member; and Rory Murphy, International Trade Analyst. Republican Staff: Becky Shipp, Health Policy Advisor; and Shannon Crowley, Special Assistant.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MAX BAUCUS, A U.S. SENATOR  
FROM MONTANA, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

Abraham Lincoln said, "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." Slavery in any form is an injustice that we must stop. Our country has fought long and bloody wars to end slavery, both at home and abroad, but unfortunately not all forms of slavery have been abolished in America.

Human trafficking, which includes both labor and sex trafficking, is not unique to third-world countries. It exists right here in America. It is quickly becoming one of the fastest-growing criminal industries in the world. Twenty-seven million people are bought and sold into slavery each year, many of them children. At least 100,000 children are exploited every year in the United States. Most of these kids are only between 12 and 14 years old.

This committee has jurisdiction over the Nation's foster care and adoption system. Today we will focus our attention on the children most vulnerable to trafficking predators: foster children. Fifty to eighty percent of the children who are exploited and sold each year in America are connected to the foster care system. The tough background and unstable upbringing of many foster youth increase their risk of exploitation.

These children frequently suffer from a history of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. They are typically moved from place to place with little or no warning. These factors, combined with a de-

sire for love and affection and a lack of appropriate adult supervision, increase their risk of exploitation.

However, all young people can become victims of this crime. We will hear today from a survivor of this horrific crime, Ms. Asia Graves. She will share with us her firsthand experience. This abuse even occurs in my home State of Montana, often referred to as one big small town, a place where we pride ourselves on old-fashioned values, a place where we know our neighbors and look out for each other. Yet, we are not immune.

I will share with you the story of one Montanan, a young woman whom I will refer to as Kay. Kay was born and raised in a solid family from Kalispell. She was an exceptional young person with everything in place for a bright future.

At 15, she met a handsome and charismatic man at a high school party. He slipped a drug into her drink. He sold Kay for sex in exchange for money and for drugs. We cannot imagine her horror upon waking. She was not the same. She had no one to turn to. The young man used her fear and depression to isolate her. Kay became addicted to heroin and was repeatedly sold to her own peers for drugs and for money.

Thanks to Windie Jo Fischer, a local outreach worker, Kay was able to escape. Windie knew what Kay was going through. Why? Because Windie had survived a similar experience at age 13. Today, Kay is doing well.

Still, too many young women just like Kay continue to suffer. The Bakken oil boom in Montana and North Dakota has brought thousands of jobs and economic activity. But the population spike has also brought increased crime, drugs, gun crime, and prostitution.

Victims are difficult to identify. They are often coerced and threatened into silence. Difficulty, though, is not an excuse for inaction. We should not sit by and allow any more children to suffer in silence. These are our sons and our daughters, and it is our job to protect them.

That is what today's hearing is about. We are here to expose this horrific problem and find out what more we should be doing to keep our kids safe. Too often, sexually exploited children have nowhere to go. The people they turn to do not know how to handle these cases. As a result, sex trafficking victims are often arrested and placed in juvenile detention. But raped and abused children should not be treated as criminals.

The juvenile justice system is making progress, but law enforcement needs the help and expertise of social workers, mental health professionals, judges, and teachers to find the right solutions for vulnerable children. It is time for the child welfare system to do its part to end sex trafficking.

Today's witnesses will tell us about the limitations of the current system to help victims. As a Nation, though, we have the responsibility to protect our girls and boys. The people who are buying and selling our children must be stopped.

As Abraham Lincoln said, "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." For as long as slavery exists in any form, we must fight to end it.

I will say that I am sorry to interrupt here, but, before we move on to introducing our panel, I would like to remind Senators that around 10:30 we will turn to the nomination of Michael Froman. Michael Froman is nominated to be the U.S. Trade Representative.

He testified before this committee last Thursday and responded to 150 questions for the record over the weekend. I believe Mr. Froman is the right man to lead the USTR, and he deserves our support. Again, at the appropriate moment, we will have to break so we can report out the nomination of Michael Froman.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Baucus appears in the appendix.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hatch?

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ORRIN G. HATCH,  
A U.S. SENATOR FROM UTAH**

Senator HATCH. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this important hearing on domestic sex trafficking of children and youth. This disturbing issue is very relevant to child welfare programs under the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee.

Domestic sex trafficking, primarily of young girls, has recently received widespread public attention; however, much remains unclear about the instances, causes, and potential solutions regarding this growing problem.

For example, there is a shortage of reliable statistical data on how many American girls are sexually trafficked. Some estimates put the number of girls at risk for sexual exploitation at nearly 300,000. If it is true that hundreds of thousands of girls may be at risk, it is particularly troubling that only a few hundred have been identified and recovered. Some of these at-risk children are officially known to the child welfare system as “thrown away” children.

These are children whose parents have either kicked them out of the house or abandoned them to the State. When these children are trafficked and come to the attention of child welfare agencies, the agencies often do not perform proper screening because the child is not in the custody of their parents. This is an appalling situation.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I think we can all agree that no child should ever be thrown away. Individuals on the front lines in the fight against trafficking report that instances of domestic sex trafficking are on the rise. They tell us that former drug dealers have moved on to sex trafficking.

They also tell us that technological advances have made this type of trafficking even easier. Smart phones and other devices provide distance and increased levels of anonymity, and certain websites that post classified ads soliciting sexual partners also help facilitate trafficking.

Reports indicate that girls in foster care are at an increased risk of being trafficked. Indeed, girls in foster care are especially vulnerable to the advances of traffickers. This is because a girl in foster care is more likely to have experienced neglect or abuse, which increases her risk. Traffickers will initially present themselves to these girls as a boyfriend who slowly provides indoctrination. Once

trafficking commences, the girl may run away from her foster or group home.

In many States, when a youth in foster care turns away, no one even looks for them. Too often, regardless of whether or not she was connected to child welfare, if a girl is arrested for prostitution, she will not be offered services or treatment.

The majority of trafficked girls are thought to be between the ages of 12 and 14. Yet, even though the law stipulates that these girls are too young to give consent, they are often treated as perpetrators of a crime rather than the victims of one.

Mr. Chairman, it is simply unacceptable that State child welfare systems are failing to serve these girls. I recognize that these may be difficult cases and that the trauma these children have endured often results in significant challenges, but we need to do a much better job in addressing their complex needs.

Congress needs to send clear, unambiguous signals to State child welfare agencies that they cannot abdicate their responsibilities that they owe to these young women. This hearing should put child welfare agencies on notice that they must begin to work with Congress and with the stakeholders in the field to properly identify and provide appropriate prevention and intervention services to victims of domestic sex trafficking and exploitation.

There are promising practices at the State level, and there are agencies that are on the right track in identifying, preventing, and intervening in these cases. This hearing will highlight some of these practices and hopefully provide us with suggestions for improvements at the Federal level.

I know that the chairman shares my view that the child welfare system in the United States is in desperate need of reform. For one thing, the financing structure of child welfare is misaligned. The majority of Federal dollars is directed at the least desirable outcome: removing children from their homes and placing them with strangers. I believe that the qualitative and systemic flaws in our current foster care system are among the factors that make girls in the foster care system so vulnerable to traffickers.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding this critical hearing. I would like to thank all of these witnesses in advance for your work and for your willingness to engage this committee on such a difficult subject. I look forward to your testimonies.

With regard to Mr. Froman, I support him. I believe he will make a great leader as U.S. Trade Representative. Mr. Chairman, I am very grateful that you are bringing him up quickly. Hopefully we will get him to the floor and get him through. I think he has the right attitude towards this job. He is certainly a very brilliant man, and one whom I have high hopes for. So having said that, I am happy to quit my remarks and get into this hearing, which is really one of the most important hearings being held this year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

[The prepared statement of Senator Hatch appears in the appendix.]

The CHAIRMAN. I am now pleased to welcome our witnesses. First is Asia Graves, who is the Maryland outreach services coordinator and survivor advocate at FAIR Girls. Second is Susan Gold-



farb, who is the executive director of the Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County. Michelle Guymon is the Probation Director at the Los Angeles County Probation Department. And Joette Katz is the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. We are very fortunate today to have two colleagues here who care a lot about children's issues. They are here to introduce two of our witnesses, Ms. Graves and Ms. Katz.

So, Senator Cardin, if you want to introduce your witness at this point.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,  
A U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND**

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you very much for holding this hearing. It is my pleasure to introduce to the committee Asia Graves. She is an incredibly brave and courageous woman. Asia serves as the Maryland program coordinator and survivor advocate for FAIR Girls in Baltimore, where she works tirelessly to prevent the exploitation of girls, with empowerment and education.

Asia's story, which she will share in a moment, is truly harrowing. She experienced something that no human should ever have to experience. What she experienced could have broken her, but she endured and survived, relating her story and using her experience to help children avoid or overcome equally harrowing experiences. By reliving her own nightmares, Asia is ensuring that fewer people will have to live through their own nightmare.

Asia has described human trafficking as the seminal human rights issue, and I could not agree more. As you pointed out, the Department of Justice estimates that hundreds of thousands of children are commercially trafficked each year.

Most of these children are quite young, the majority being between the ages of 12 and 14. Asia herself was 16 years of age. It is a modern form of slavery. The victims *are* victims, and law enforcement needs to be better educated so they are not prosecuted and victimized a second time.

This problem exists in the United States. We have our Trafficking in Persons report that is published annually that points out many of the origin countries and transit countries. I am proud of the work of the U.S. Helsinki Commission in highlighting those concerns, but there are also destination countries that need to do more, including the United States of America. Asia Gray's testimony here today will point out that we still have a long way to go in the United States.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Blumenthal, would you like to introduce your witness?

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD BLUMENTHAL,  
A U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT**

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to join in thanking you for calling attention and shining light on this pernicious and prevalent problem. Thank you to you and Ranking Member Hatch. I want to thank Senator Portman for joining me in forming the Human Trafficking Caucus, a bipartisan caucus consisting of a number of our colleagues who are focused on this prob-

lem of human trafficking both abroad and at home. It is, in fact, a scourge. It is a growing problem both abroad and at home.

The goal of shining this light on the role of child welfare systems is critically important, because all too often they are a conduit rather than a savior and protector, in effect inadvertently an enabler of child trafficking and exploitation.

The role that Commissioner Katz has played in our State has been extraordinary in improving the services offered by our Department of Children and Families. She came there after a very distinguished career on the State Supreme Court, serving for 18 years as an associate justice. She wrote more than 2,000 opinions, and is an extremely able and talented jurist.

But she has taken over a department that was much in need of the kind of reforms she implemented—that hopefully others can use as a model around the country—in addressing the 4,000—and I repeat, 4,000—children who are in her direct care and custody and 36,000 children whom she aids and helps, along with 16,000 families, across the State of Connecticut.

So again, my thanks to you for calling attention to this problem, and I hope that we can continue to work to make sure that no child is at risk of the exploitation and suffering, lifetimes of suffering often, that result from this scourge. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senators, both of you. We deeply appreciate your efforts here.

We will begin now with the witnesses. Ms. Graves, you can proceed. Our practice here is that each of your written statements will be automatically included in the record, and then we urge each of you to summarize your statements in about 5, 6 minutes, whatever works for you.

Ms. Graves?

**STATEMENT OF ASIA GRAVES, MARYLAND OUTREACH SERVICES COORDINATOR AND SURVIVOR ADVOCATE, FAIR GIRLS, BALTIMORE, MD**

Ms. GRAVES. I would like to first thank Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Hatch, and the Senate Finance Committee for giving me the chance to testify at today's hearing, "Sex Trafficking and Exploitation in America: Child Welfare's Role in Prevention and Intervention."

My name is Asia Graves. I am the prevention education coordinator for FAIR Girls and survivors of domestic minor sex trafficking in America. It is an honor to have this opportunity to speak to you today about what human trafficking looks like here domestically, how trafficking interacts with the child welfare system, and to make you understand that a girl who is involved in human trafficking is a victim in need of long-term compassionate services. She is not a prostitute or a criminal.

I would first like to start out by telling you my story of surviving sex trafficking. I believe that I am one of the lucky few, because I received the care and support I needed to overcome my past. Then I would like to share with you the work I do at FAIR Girls to find and empower hundreds more girl survivors of sex trafficking right here in the Nation's capital.

As a survivor of sex trafficking, I no longer consider myself to be a victim. As you know, the average age of entry is only 13 years old. My life as a victim of sex trafficking began at 16. I was already battling things that no child should ever experience. I did not have a positive support system.

My family did not care for me, and my teachers and the social workers who met me did not see the warning signs. By the time my pimp sold me, I was isolated and scared, which is exactly what most girls feel as they fall victim. At 16, I was living with my mother, who was addicted to crack cocaine and herself a victim of years of abuse. I did not know what else to do, so I moved in with my father, who was an alcoholic. I did not know that my life would turn upside down.

My dad told me that I had to pay \$900 a month in rent or I would be thrown out. How was I supposed to come up with that at 16? I got a job working as many hours as I could, even missed school. When I could not pay the rent, my father threw me out.

So, with no place to go, in January of 2004, during one of the biggest snow storms in Boston's history, I went out to dinner with a group of young ladies whom I was living with in a one-bedroom apartment. While I lived with them, they took me to dinner and left me at the restaurant and made me walk outside, where there were a group of pimps who approached me. I tried to run away, but I could not get away.

There was a young, nice-looking guy who approached me and told me that I was too beautiful to be outside in this snow, so, with no place to go, I actually went with him. I felt that was my best option, better than sleeping on a park bench in the snow. For the first week, everything was a fairy tale, full of romance, good food, and a place to sleep.

But then things changed. After a week, he told me that he was a pimp and I was his property. When I told him I wanted to leave, he beat me for the first time. Then he called an escort service, took naked pictures of me, and put me on their website. Men came to the hotel and had sex with me. He told me that he would kill me or let these men kill me if I did not have sex.

Two weeks later, he took me to the track, which is a place where pimps sell girls like me, and made me work all night, rain or snow, even if I was sick. He said that if I did not, then he would kill my family. He sold me to several pimps that had sex with me and forced me to have sex with other men.

My story is sad, but it is common, and there are girls like me all around. But people do not see them, so they remain victims.

Three years passed. Pimp after pimp, beating after beating and feeling like I would never be free and feeling like maybe I was not even worth this world, I did not even feel like I was worth a \$3.00 Happy Meal.

After being beaten in the head with an iron, sexually assaulted with a hair brush, I had enough. I was pregnant. I wanted my baby. I wanted someone to love me for me. I tried to run but was held hostage at gunpoint.

When I finally escaped, I spoke to the first officer I could find. My traffickers took their revenge out on me. I thought I was safe in staying with a friend, but the next morning my trafficker sent

four women with steel-toed Timberland boots to assault me. They knew that I was pregnant. They kicked me all over my stomach and left me beaten on the sidewalk. I lost my baby and felt like garbage. I could have died, but something inside me said to fight.

I walked to the nearest police station and met an officer named Sergeant Kelly O'Connell, who met me at the door. She knew my trafficker. During an interview, I started to miscarry, and Kelly O'Connell took me to the hospital.

Honestly, I was blessed to have found Kelly O'Connell and a group of investigators to believe in me and my story. I did not wake up one morning and say, "I want to be a prostitute." No girl does. There is no such thing as a child prostitute, because legally children cannot consent to sex. No girl chooses to be a slave, yet girls like me are the faces of modern-day slavery in America. You might ask how this is possible. It is because 80 to 90 percent of victims are sexually abused. That is my story. I was raped from the age of 6 by my mother's drug dealer. I was vulnerable.

I wanted to start off by giving you guys some recommendations that I feel are key. The first of three critical changes we need is funding to open specialized foster homes where girls who are sold into sex slavery can actually be rescued and taken care of.

Second, every social worker and teacher should be educated on how to see the red flags and report a victim.

Third, every high-risk youth, mostly girls, notably in the child welfare system, needs to be educated on how to stay safe from sex trafficking.

The first critical change is to open specialized foster homes where girls and boys sold into sex slavery can truly receive the compassionate care they deserve. Oftentimes at FAIR Girls we have no place for these young girls to go. We do our best with our partners, but many times we are hiding in hotels with girls looking for a safehouse.

This is not how a victim of slavery who has been freed should spend her first night. Many FAIR Girls and many social service agencies nationwide have a staff and vision to create specialized safehouses, but we need the resources to launch and sustain them. I think you could help us make that happen.

Second, every social worker and teacher needs to be educated on how to identify and assist trafficking victims of sex slavery. FAIR Girls is a member of the DC Anti-Trafficking Task Force, and we have educated hundreds of law enforcement officers, social workers, and educators in victim identification.

We can only truly help American children keep safe and keep them safe if their adult support systems are educated and given the tools they need to understand the warning signs before a child is victimized. I often wonder, how could this have happened? What would have happened if one of my teachers or social workers would have intervened and taken action before I was sold to pimps all over America? This is not an expensive training, but it is life-saving.

Third, children, their teachers, and the social workers need to be educated nationwide on how to stay safe from sex trafficking. As prevention and education coordinator at FAIR Girls, I have educated thousands of teen girls and boys in foster care, schools, and

detention centers. This curriculum has educated more than 4,000 children nationwide.

Children in the child welfare system are the most at risk and absolutely have to be educated on how to avoid being sold into sex trafficking. Had someone like me come to my school when I was 16, maybe my story of exploitation would have never happened. Recently, one teen mom came to me saying that she was being pressured by her older boyfriend to strip because she needed the money.

I was able to join up with her schoolteacher and the child welfare advocate to stop her from falling into sex trafficking. FAIR Girls has hundreds of stories just like hers. I work directly with DC and Maryland child welfare agencies, and this evidenced-based partnership model could be emulated with the right services.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today, and there are many more stories I would like to share, as I believe passionately in the rights of the many girl survivors that we serve at FAIR Girls. I am open to questions. I consider today to be the beginning of a wonderful dialogue that will lead to creating new resources to help girls like me.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Graves. We thank you for your courage.

Ms. GRAVES. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Graves appears in the appendix.]

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Guymon?

**STATEMENT OF MICHELLE GUYMON, PROBATION DIRECTOR,  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT, INNOCENCE LOST LA TASK FORCE, LOS ANGELES, CA**

Ms. GUYMON. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for raising awareness of sex trafficking and exploitation in America. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Michelle Guymon. I am a Probation Director with Los Angeles County, the largest county in the Nation. I have worked in LA County for nearly 25 years within the Probation Department. Today I would like to tell you a little bit about how I was a member of Juvenile Justice and began working on this issue. I would also like to address how Probation is beginning to partner with Child Welfare to prevent this crime and safeguard survivors.

In 2010, as a part of my role in our Probation Department, I was serving on our Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect committee. I was asked by a judge to be a part of a subcommittee on sex trafficking. I am not sure how you tell a judge "no," but I agreed to go ahead and be on the committee.

While I had no idea as a probation officer why our department would be involved in human trafficking, I thought, I love to travel. Who would not want to go to Thailand, Indonesia, or Cambodia?

Then November 16, 2010 came. I remember the date so vividly, because it was the day that changed my life. It was the first meeting of the Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Subcommittee. It was there that I learned that this exploitation was not something that happened thousands of miles away in a foreign country; in fact, it was happening right here in our community to the very young girls I was charged to protect.

The next few days were difficult for me emotionally. I reflected on the many young girls who had crossed my path because they had been brought into Juvenile Justice on prostitution-related charges. Like many people within and outside the system, I had judged them.

What made it particularly difficult for me is that I have a master's degree in social work. I took pride in my ability to connect with young people. I felt I was a good therapist and felt that we did a lot of great work, dealing with amazing young women who had experienced significant trauma.

But I missed this trauma. This sexual abuse experienced by many young girls was not a direct correlation to why they chose to sell their bodies, but rather the very reason they were at such great risk for sexual exploitation. How did I not make this connection? To be honest, I beat myself up for a long time but realized I could not change the past. From that day to this, my mantra has been, and will be, when you know better, you have to do better.

Over the past 2 years, we have worked hard to bring awareness to Los Angeles County, both inside and outside the system. One member of our board of supervisors, Don Knabe, was integral in the launch of a public awareness campaign in our metro system in the places where girls were most vulnerable.

We have created video messages and done countless media interviews, because public awareness is critical. Until we as a society begin to shift our thinking from "teen prostitute" to "victims of sexual exploitation," nothing will change for these young women.

Therefore, we must develop systems and protocols to identify these children much earlier. Because so many exploited children have a history in the child welfare system, that system provides an opportunity for prevention and early intervention efforts.

However, Child Welfare has expressed many challenges and barriers to serving victims of sexual exploitation. They require unique and specialized services that the child welfare system, at this time, is not built, nor resourced, to effectively handle. We must fix this. Because of family dysfunction, many victims are in group homes or shelters. They run away and are living on the streets.

A pimp or exploiter preys on this vulnerability. Statistics say that one in three teens will be recruited by a pimp within 48 hours of leaving home and becoming homeless. He may pose as a boyfriend or parental figure, offering to provide food, shelter, clothes, security, even love. Later, after that emotional bond has been established, she is forced to engage in commercial sexual acts or face brutal physical violence.

Foster youth are extremely susceptible to exploitation due to their lack of attachment, and their need to belong to someone. One young girl with whom I have worked grew up in the foster care system, was adopted, and then sold by her adoptive mother to sustain her drug habit. She told me, "I remember the first time my pimp told me that I would be going to a hotel to have sex with men. In the pit of my stomach I knew this did not seem or feel right. I had a really bad feeling, but my need for love and to really belong to someone was more important. Because of my own sexual abuse as a child with different men, I already knew what having sex with men was all about, so I went."

No one agency or system can adequately service these victims alone. Right now we are faced with a major challenge: how do we identify, develop, and implement a collaborative response to this growing problem? Again, it starts with a paradigm shift on how we see these young women. Your hearing today is evidence of that change happening.

I would like to close with the words of a young victim survivor we are now working with who recently wrote about her experiences. She said, "I would strive to change the law and how people view young people who are being sold, bought, and abused. The lifestyle is not a choice for us. Still, people look at us with disgust. It makes us feel 10 times more pitiful. What we look like on the outside does not match how we feel on the inside. Please remember there are hundreds, if not thousands, of stories similar to mine. So let us help those in need, not judge and neglect us anymore. Show us that there is something better for us out there. Give us a chance we have never had. I will appreciate this more than you could ever know."

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ms. Guymon.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Guymon appears in the appendix.]

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Goldfarb, you are next.

**STATEMENT OF SUSAN GOLDFARB, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF SUFFOLK COUNTY, BOS-  
TON, MA**

Ms. GOLDFARB. Good morning, Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Hatch, and members of the committee. Thank you for the invitation to join you here today.

My name is Susan Goldfarb. I am the executive director of the Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County, a Boston-based organization dedicated to healing and justice for child and teen victims of exploitation and abuse. I am grateful for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of a once-invisible population.

As a professional working in the field of child abuse for more than 25 years, I cannot overstate the need to finally recognize and address the needs of these incredibly vulnerable and under-served children.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children, which we also call CSEC, is a crime of systemized brutality and sexual assault that is deliberately waged on children with prior histories of neglect, isolation, and vulnerability. Historically, these children have been labeled child prostitutes, treated as criminals, and perhaps even worse, ignored altogether.

In Boston, I have the privilege of working with the Support to End Exploitation Now Coalition, also called SEEN, an initiative of the Children's Advocacy Center, the Office of the District Attorney Daniel F. Conley, and over 35 governmental and community-based partners.

SEEN was founded in 2006 with the core beliefs that commercial sexual exploitation of children is child abuse, not delinquency, and that exploited youth are child victims, not criminals. This was a turning point in our community.

Building on these core beliefs, hundreds of professionals have been trained to recognize and respond to exploitation. As a result, since 2006 we have identified and served more than 700 high-risk and sexually exploited youth, where before we were not seeing them at all, and we have learned a great deal.

Also, we now know what we have long suspected: these children are truly among the most vulnerable. We have learned that upwards of 70 percent have a history of sexual abuse, physical abuse and/or neglect, and child welfare involvement.

Roughly 65 percent have a history of running away, and nearly 60 percent of the children were 15 years or younger at the time that they were referred to us. Traffickers know this vulnerability, and they exploit it. It is our responsibility to prevent and stop them.

So how can we do this? I believe that child welfare agencies are, and will continue to be, at the center of this work. As my child welfare colleagues in Boston have said, these are our kids.

So I would like to outline five challenges that also offer opportunities. The first is mandated reporting of commercial sexual exploitation. In most States, exploitation continues to go unreported to child welfare, but it is a form of child abuse and should be reported as such in all States.

Second, there is a lack of data. When commercial sexual exploitation is reported to Child Protective Services, most child welfare databases classify the reports as sexual abuse or neglect. There is no category for CSEC. As a result, there is no mechanism or coding to collect data about how many children are being served or are in need.

Third, there are limitations within the child welfare system to serve all exploited children. In most States, child welfare becomes involved only when an alleged offender is in a caretaking role. But a pimp is not considered a caretaker, so the majority of exploitation reports are screened out. A few States have expanded the scope of their screening to include adult caretakers who have a child under his or her control. This change allows exploited youth who have no familial caretaker in their life to receive the support and services they need.

Fourth, there is a need for training and development of agency protocols. While child welfare agencies are already serving these children, the CSEC is often not recognized. Training is needed agency-wide to ensure universal screening, identification, and understanding of the exploited child's experience, and trauma-informed service planning. Policies are needed to ensure timely interagency communication and collaboration between child welfare, law enforcement, and others when responding to exploitation.

Finally, we need multi-disciplinary collaboration. On average, each child victim of commercial sexual exploitation is involved with three to four agencies. A true safety net requires consistency, communication, and teamwork across agencies and systems.

Children's advocacy centers across the Nation are experts in facilitating collaboration on behalf of abused children, and are a ready resource to advance this work. These are achievable changes. There is an astonishing level of public interest in sex trafficking of children and a growing body of knowledge regarding best practices.



We have an opportunity to leverage this interest and expertise and make real changes that will honestly restore and save lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Goldfarb, very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Goldfarb appears in the appendix.]

The CHAIRMAN. The final witness is Ms. Katz. Are you a judge? Ms. KATZ. I was a judge.

The CHAIRMAN. A recovering judge. [Laughter.] Judge Katz, you are next.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOETTE KATZ, J.D., COMMISSIONER,  
CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES,  
HARTFORD, CT**

Judge KATZ. Thank you very much. Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Hatch, and distinguished members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Joette Katz, and I am the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, otherwise known as DCF.

I would like to share with the committee some of the efforts that the State of Connecticut has undertaken to address the issue of domestic minor sex trafficking, DMST, and its impact on our children.

First, it is important to provide an important backdrop. Although much attention has been paid to these human rights violations in other countries, it is perhaps less widely known that child trafficking is occurring in the United States at an alarming rate.

The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 200,000 American children are potentially trafficked each year into the sex trade. The U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons report of 2010 found that the majority of domestic victims enslaved in the sex industry are runaway and homeless youth.

Nationally, 450,000 children run away from home each year, and 1 out of every 3 teens on the street will be lured toward prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home. This means at least 150,000 children are lured into prostitution each year. The average age of children victimized by pornography and prostitution in the United States is 12 years old.

Data show that children who are involved with child welfare services, specifically in the foster care system, are at a much higher risk of being trafficked into the sex trade. The Department of Children and Families is one of the Nation's few agencies to offer child protection, behavioral health, juvenile justice, and prevention services under the umbrella of a single department.

Accordingly, whether children are abused, neglected, involved in the juvenile justice system, or experience emotional, mental health, or substance abuse issues, the department can respond to these children in a way that draws upon community and State resources to help.

Over the past few years, we have seen a dramatic increase in the trafficking of minors in Connecticut. Human trafficking is the third most profitable criminal industry in the world, generating an estimated \$32 billion per year. The reaction of moral outrage that is

prompted in the face of such child victimization has fueled considerable work of the department to galvanize a system-wide collaborative effort necessary to identify and combat this.

Since 2008, when collaborative efforts in Connecticut significantly increased, both internally at the department and externally with the community, there have been approximately 130 children who have been identified and confirmed as victims of DMST.

Of those victims identified, 98 percent have been involved with child welfare services in some manner, and many of these children have been victimized while legally in the care and custody of the department. To address the problem, over the past 2 years the department has been collaborating with local, State, and Federal law enforcement to better coordinate our response, particularly as it relates to the children in our child welfare system.

We have found that the most significant barriers have been the identification of minor victims, development of appropriate responses, and enforcement of laws leading to the arrest and prosecution of persons responsible for these crimes.

Identification of minor victims could not be accomplished without a State-wide training initiative that incorporated the definition of the Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the evolving State legislation in Connecticut that has been modeled by other jurisdictions throughout the country. Most importantly, identification and response requires raising the awareness of the children and youths themselves who are being victimized by trafficking. The ultimate goal of the trainings is to change the lens, through which we view these most vulnerable youth, from prostitute to victim, or survivor, as the girls would describe themselves.

The State-wide training initiative in Connecticut has rolled out in various stages over the past few years. To date, our training academy has provided 2 full days of training to hundreds of department employees on the issues of DMST, with 30 trainers from the department who are available to conduct an abbreviated version.

Training sessions have occurred across the State for parole and probation officers, private providers, police, emergency medical services, hospitals and emergency departments, schools and various other community entities, among others.

In addition, the department offers a 2-hour certified training on DMST to police officers from around the State through Connecticut's Police Officer Standards and Training Council. To date, hundreds of officers have been trained.

The department's CARELINE, which is our 24-hour intake and information center, was at the forefront of this initiative, ensuring that any potential case involving a minor be reviewed despite the lack of a legal mandate. The department protocol has evolved over the years, and now our CARELINE accepts all cases of DMST regardless of whether the alleged perpetrator is the entrusted caregiver.

The department also continues to advocate for more robust legislation to combat DMST. In recent years, the Connecticut General Assembly has passed several acts regarding DMST, including legislation that ensures law enforcement refer minor victims to the department rather than arresting any exploited youth for prostitution.

In response to this act, the DCF CARELINE implemented a designated calling number for law enforcement to improve the department's response to police officers, as well as any potential victims in need of services.

This past week, our State legislature approved a bill that provides a comprehensive response to address the issue of sexual exploitation and human trafficking by enhancing criminal penalties for the purchase and trafficking of minors, protecting child victims, and adopting a criminal justice framework for investigation and prosecution.

To further assist with the development of a comprehensive and systemic response, an inter-agency team was established and is known as the Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team, HART. The HART team, led by the department, is a multi-disciplinary collaboration including staff from the department, private providers, and the Office of the Victim Advocate.

All cases that are called into the CARELINE are reviewed and monitored by a member of the HART team to ensure an appropriate response that includes the provision of services to victims whose cases have not been substantiated.

To guarantee that all cases are prosecuted to the fullest extent permitted by Federal and State law, the department also collaborates with the FBI and Homeland Security on a regular basis.

Through HART, the department's response protocol, which was designed by a department psychiatrist, includes new practice guidelines that provide a detailed framework to respond to potential victims. Additionally, the department's medical team, in collaboration with the private provider network, developed a nursing assessment tool to help identify and treat youth.

Although the department has not received additional funds, providers across the State who work with minor girls have been trained on the issue of DMST, ensuring competencies at every service level. A "My Life, My Choice" curriculum has been offered at various congregate care programs throughout the State and is now being implemented in community-based programs as well. These strategies not only help to prevent youth from being trafficked, but also aid the youth in their self-identification.

In conclusion, while much of our focus in Connecticut has been on the girls, we are equally concerned about the issues of boys and DMST. This issue currently is under review by the department in collaboration with our private provider network, with a primary focus on identification and response.

In addition, the department is finalizing the design of a curriculum for adolescent boys in an effort to deter boys and young men from encouraging and/or engaging in the acts of DMST. We are proud that we have made considerable progress in increasing awareness of this horrific issue, but we fully understand that we still have a lot of work to do in Connecticut to protect our vulnerable children.

To help illustrate the magnitude of this problem, attached to my testimony is a brief synopsis of two of our cases. Both of these children were involved with the child welfare system.

Once again, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak today, and obviously, at the appropriate time, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Judge Katz appears in the appendix.]

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you all very much. As I listen to you, I am struck with several points. One is, there seems to be a significant effort, primarily in the States, whether it is Connecticut, Los Angeles, Maryland, or DC, and people in the appropriate agencies and State jurisdictions have worked hard to try to resolve this.

I am also struck with a seeming agreement among all of you, which is that the child welfare system should be responsible for all sexually exploited children, irrespective of their parents, guardians, or foster homes, or even those on the streets. There must be much more mandatory reporting, and there must be more training, et cetera.

The question I have, though, is, what is the Federal role here? What can we in Congress do to help States? You certainly seem to have a good grasp of the problem, but what can we do to help; what can the Federal Government do to help here? Does anybody want to answer first? Ms. Graves?

Ms. GRAVES. From my point of view at FAIR Girls, I think that housing is key because, if you do not address the issue of housing—in Baltimore city there are only six beds dedicated to homeless youth. In DC, there are only eight beds dedicated to homeless youth. So, without actually working on that issue first, what are we going to do? The pimps are going to get the girls before we get the girls. We can prevent trafficking by having a stable place for youth to live in.

I know that I did not have a stable place, and, without a stable place to live, I could not do anything. A pimp was easily able to grab me. As the numbers show, a youth that is on the street is going to interact with a pimp, 1 out of 3, within 72 hours. So, if we could address the issue of homelessness first, and at the Federal level with funding for housing, I think that would be key.

The CHAIRMAN. All right.

Ms. Guymon, what do you think?

Ms. GUYMON. Well, I think one of the other issues, and it was talked about with everybody, is training. I think there need to be resources for training. Again, unless people are aware that these young women are not on the street by choice, then nothing really changes for them, and nothing changes for all of us.

The CHAIRMAN. Who should be trained?

Ms. GUYMON. I think there are a lot of programs out there. Like they said in Connecticut, they have built curriculums. I think there are various curriculums out there throughout the United States. I think there needs to be mandated trainers who come out and go through the training.

I know that OJJDP has sponsored a couple of grants where they have put together training curriculums that have direct correlation to CSEC, the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, and I think States should be mandated to put that training forward.

The CHAIRMAN. Teachers? Whom do you train?

Ms. GUYMON. Anybody who is involved with young girls and young boys. I would say teachers, community. I know within our

department and within our county, we have trained over 2,500 people in the past year, from all the different department agencies: mental health, health services, the district attorney, law enforcement, and just basic people in the community who have organizations that work with community action groups, to just really look at, if you see something, report it. So I think just anyone who has access to children and who works with children to provide services.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there good trainers?

Ms. GUYMON. I think there are some very good trainers, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. All right.

Ms. Goldfarb?

Ms. GOLDFARB. What I would reiterate is the need to really recognize this as child abuse, and along with that comes the mandated reporting to child welfare. While that is shifting within some States, if there was leadership at the Federal level that really either encouraged that or made that a policy priority, by doing that, it would really begin to create a safety net for this population.

When every professional in the community has an obligation to make that report, and then child welfare receives that report, that is really the first step in connecting all of the agencies that are going to be helpful in supporting an exploited child, because in most States, child welfare is immediately going to connect with law enforcement. It is really going to create a team of people who are looking after that child's needs. I think in order to really advance that, it requires leadership from the highest level.

The CHAIRMAN. It is similar to the Violence Against Women Act, and that was a Federal policy years ago which helped focus attention on spousal abuse, and the abuse that women sometimes face. Something similar, you are suggesting.

Judge Katz?

Judge KATZ. Thank you. Yes. Actually, I think this is very similar to what was done with regard to domestic violence, as well as sexual assault. I am viewing this through a financial lens, quite frankly, because I think that there needs to be more financial consequences, both for pimps and johns. In Connecticut, we just passed some in rem proceedings, forfeiture.

I mean, it really is in some ways hitting people where it hurts. A lot of trafficking goes on at large venues: the Super Bowl, gambling casinos. I think you need to shine a light on what goes on there and, again, have attendant financial consequences in addition to the in rem proceedings.

Then finally, along the same vein, I think there needs to be some attention to publishers. What I mean by that is, we have legislation in Connecticut that goes after people who place advertisements, escort services, in which they are trafficking young girls. But frankly, the publishers who publish these newspaper ads do so with complete impunity, and I question that, quite frankly.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you all. I apologize, but I am going to have to break in a little bit to conduct a little business. We have a quorum present, so we can consider the nomination of Michael Froman to be U.S. Trade Representative. I would encourage Senators to submit their statements for the record so we can take action on Mr. Froman.

If there is no further debate, I would entertain a motion that we report the nomination.

Senator HATCH. I so move.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the nomination is reported. I do not see a roll call being requested, so we will proceed. No, we do not need one. All right.

The nomination is ordered reported. Thanks to all Senators for their attendance. I deeply appreciate it. All right.

Senator Hatch?

Senator HATCH. Ms. Graves, I want to thank you so much for being at the hearing today and for your courage and resiliency and your efforts to try to help other young women who have suffered as you have.

As a survivor advocate, I would like your view on one of the key recommendations from the National Foster Care Youth and Alumni Policy Council, which calls for a "youth-friendly resource for reporting abuse." Can you offer any suggestions on what would need to be in place in order to provide for that type of a resource?

On a related topic, some have suggested that a domestic sex trafficking reporting hot-line be established. Others do not believe that that hot-line will be an effective deterrent or intervention tool. So, I would like your views on the establishment of a hot-line as well.

Ms. GRAVES. I do agree, and I think that there has to be a youth-friendly reporting place. My suggestion is that there needs to be a text message or online resource that is youth-friendly and safe, where they can report abuse, whether that is abuse by a pimp or abuse inside the foster home or group home.

In certain circumstances, it might not be safe for a youth to make a phone call. This would be because of a violent pimp or possibly a foster parent or adult who may retaliate against them. Most youth have cell phones. At FAIR Girls, we are testing a mobile application on relationship safety called the Charm Alarm. If we create a similar system of reporting for this, I think that it could be beneficial. I feel that it would be really beneficial.

So, just as important, there needs to be a place for youth to go after they make a report. This is why, at FAIR Girls, we are advocating for opening a safehouse for girls identified as victims in DC.

You asked me as well about the hot-line. I feel that a hot-line would not be an effective tool. Currently, we have the National Human Trafficking Hot-line. The issue is not having an appropriate place for youth to call, but the resources to fund organizations that provide direct services to victims.

I believe that, if we can make sure that all victims who encounter law enforcement and direct service providers are given information for the National Human Trafficking Hot-line, that would actually make it more condensed, where all the victims are going into one place and we know exactly where these victims are. Creating another hot-line would be duplicating an already working system, in my opinion.

Senator HATCH. All right. Thank you.

Commissioner Katz and Ms. Guymon, I want to thank you for appearing. This is an extremely important hearing as far as I am concerned. I want to thank you for the work that you do, all four of you. It is terrific, what you are trying to do, especially in States

that have undertaken policies to address issues associated with trafficked minors.

Can you produce further details on what happens to the trafficker when the trafficking case is screened into the child welfare system? For instance, is he considered a legal guardian for purposes of establishing abuse? Are there automatic procedures to engage law enforcement? Can you just give us some background on that, any of you?

Ms. GUYMON. In Los Angeles, I think one of the issues that we struggle with is, no, we do not consider him, the trafficker, a guardian. In most cases, we have a difficult time figuring out who the trafficker is, because young women do not disclose who it is because they are afraid.

So, therefore, we get a hot-line call, and there is no perpetrator, if you would, on that. There is legislation happening in California which will allow child welfare to screen a case and be able to bring a young person into the child welfare system.

Again, I think child welfare is built on the perpetrator being a family member or someone who is related. They have started taking hot-line calls as early as January of this year for mandated reporting of sex trafficking, and so far, since January, they have introduced 75 young women into the foster care system just in Los Angeles.

But I think, again, in identifying the trafficker, it is very difficult. I will say, because of a lot of the prevention and intervention work that we are doing within Los Angeles County, within the last 18 months we have had 24 young women testify against their trafficker, which has been quite a few more than it was a few years back. I think that really has to do with a lot of the support and services that we have been able to put in place in Los Angeles.

Senator HATCH. Great.

Commissioner Katz?

Judge KATZ. Thank you. We are fortunate in Connecticut because we do not worry, frankly, as to whether or not the trafficker is an entrusted guardian, because more often than not the trafficker is not an entrusted guardian. I mean, certainly if the child is being trafficked by his or her parent, then, from a procedural standpoint, the case is really easy.

We substantiate and obviously remove the child from the parent and put services in place, et cetera, but we do not consider ourselves limited by that, fortunately. We respond to those girls within 2 hours. Our CARELINE is trained on how to respond, because, very much like domestic violence, it really is a difficult situation, and we need to be very thoughtful and mindful of how we respond to these girls.

We want to embrace them and not prosecute them. We contact law enforcement immediately. We engage law enforcement, often on the Federal level, but just as often on the State level. We surrender the information that we have to law enforcement agencies. We partner with them. Then we immediately engage our leaders—one of whom is with me today, Tammy Sneed; another is Bill Rivera—and our HART team to try to attend to these girls, immediately wrap services around them.

If in fact they need hospital care, we also partner with our local medical facilities, again through the protocol designed by our nurses, so that these girls do not sit in a waiting room on a triage system for hours on end. They are brought into a back room where they are gently treated by doctors and nurses who have been equally trained in this area.

I cannot emphasize training enough. I know you have heard a great deal about it today. I want to echo that because, just like with domestic violence and sexual assault victims, it is key in how you respond to these young ladies—generally young ladies—in the first instance, because you get one shot.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator HATCH. I want to thank all of you, too, for being here.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Brown?

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Graves, you said in your testimony, “The teachers and social workers who met me did not see the warning signs.” What do we do to equip adults, especially in the case of social workers and others, but teachers and adults that someone like you would have run into? How do we equip them better to listen to you, to pay attention to what you say, to actually believe your story when you try to talk to them in those few moments that you might get to interact with somebody outside in that way?

Ms. GRAVES. For me, I think that the key thing you just said was believing in them and believing what they say. If you do not believe what a youth says, even if it may seem a little bit outlandish, some of what they are saying may be true.

I do not think a girl or a young woman is going to say, “I was raped” if she probably was not raped. I mean, rape is one crime that no woman wants to even discuss most times, and most rapes go unreported. So as a young woman, when I was encountering social workers and teachers and saying I was raped, I was raped, I was raped, no one believed me.

My teachers, social workers, the doctors, would not even do medical tests. I think that is reprehensible now, that no one would even do that. I think the best way to actually fix that and equip them is, we have a prevention education program that we teach in Baltimore city schools, as well as in DC public high schools.

You would be surprised that most teachers do not even know that human trafficking happens in their own city. I mean, human trafficking happens right outside our Nation’s capital. Human trafficking happened right downtown in Baltimore on Baltimore Street and Gay Street, which the students—you would be surprised that the students actually know more about trafficking than the teachers do. They know that it is happening in their communities.

If you could have a professional development day for all social workers and all teachers and make it a mandatory requirement federally as well as in colleges—I know that in my small college in Tennessee, for this past semester they tried something new, where they let me teach the class on trafficking for 1 day, going over what is trafficking, how it affects social workers.

So, if all social workers in college were mandatorily required to go through training on human trafficking, anyone who interacts with children—whether they are probation officers, and we train



DJS employees all the time—anyone who is interacting with the youth should be trained on human trafficking and trained on what the warning signs are, which are multiple STDs, running away from home, showing up with expensive items that they cannot afford. I mean, how can a 14-year-old afford an iPhone 5 and brand-new Louis Vuitton shoes that I cannot afford as someone who works full-time? Things like that.

Senator BROWN. Thank you.

What you said about adults not recognizing this problem in this country is, I think, so important to underscore. That is one reason I think the chairman calling this hearing is so important. I think most of us in this country think of sex trafficking and trafficking for labor, too, as something in the developing world, something only in the poorest countries. That is what makes this hearing important.

Toledo, by some studies, is—and I know that is one reason Senator Portman has taken this issue on. It is important to him and to our State. It is because of its location, in part, and being at the intersection of two major east/west and north/south interstates, that it is part of this.

I appreciate what you said about housing in response to the chairman's question, specifically how important that is. My understanding is that in Ohio, according to a University of Toledo study, a runaway child will most likely be approached by a trafficker, a recruiter, after having left home, within 2 weeks, sometimes obviously as early as 48 hours. What do we do to protect these children in those situations, when they have run away, from being lured into trafficking? Give us a couple of thoughts on that, Ms. Graves.

Ms. GRAVES. Treat them as a victim instead of as a criminal, because most youth, they are going to get arrested within a couple of weeks of being out on the streets for doing something. It may not be prostitution. It may be stealing clothes from a store. I mean, I know there was one time I got in trouble at a grocery store in Boston, in Beacon Hill, for stealing groceries.

So, when you are stealing groceries and you are 16 years old, you would think that they would actually call the police and say, well, this youth must be homeless, let us do something about it. Where are the youth supposed to go when they are homeless and on the streets?

As you said, in Toledo they basically meet a pimp within 2 weeks. So, if they are sleeping on a park bench or staying at—doing what we call in DC, couch surfing—that is what the kids call it: couch surfing. If they are couch surfing from place to place to place, why are any of these people not noticing it?

Senator BROWN. So what happened when you were caught taking those groceries? What specifically happened from the grocery store management and the police?

Ms. GRAVES. They barred me from going into the store again and said that I was a criminal and that I was a thief, and they threatened to arrest me. The police asked me where I lived, and I made up a fake address because I did not want to say that I was homeless. What youth wants to say, I have no place to go, that I have no family to count on? I mean, when I could not pay my rent to my father, he said, "You cannot live here."

Why did the child welfare system not get involved then? Why did the child welfare system not say, we need to make sure that this man who has 21 children and is not paying child support for any of them, why did they not say, let us look into him? They knew he was alcoholic. They had been to the house prior to me living there, and they knew that I was going there. I had been to the hospital.

I used to go sleep in hospitals. So, when you are trying to sneak into hospitals and do not have a place to stay, and the hospital is letting you stay there for a day, then saying, oh, well, is something wrong with you, and you are saying, yes, my ankle hurts—I went to the hospital for multiple injuries, and no one got involved until I was beaten to the point of death. No medical personnel or anyone else.

Senator BROWN. Thank you. Thanks, Ms. Graves.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Portman?

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate you having this hearing today, increasing awareness of the issue. Senator Brown is right, in Ohio we do have a problem. We do everywhere. In 2010, Toledo was listed as the fourth-ranking city in America in terms of human trafficking. That is one reason Senator Brown and I are engaged.

But it happens in all of our cities in Ohio and in many of our rural areas, so I really appreciate the fact that all of you are engaged on this issue and every day in the trenches, and specifically raising awareness today.

Ms. Graves, your testimony was really powerful, as it always is.

Ms. GRAVES. Thank you.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you for being willing to get out there and tell what have to be painful stories.

In response to Senator Brown, I thought that was good to hear more about, how do you recognize the signs, specifically for teachers, social workers, and law enforcement.

You also talked during your testimony about keeping girls safe and helping girls to understand; I think you said educating girls as to the dangers. What do you find are the most successful tools to educate youth who might be vulnerable?

Ms. GRAVES. Currently we teach a 4-module curriculum in DC and Maryland schools, and in detention centers and in group homes. By teaching this curriculum, which goes over, what is trafficking—and we use modern music, things that they listen to every day, to say, well, how does the music industry impact trafficking? What does trafficking look like in your community? Who is trafficked? A lot of times they will say “taken,” things of that sort.

That is the view that I hear from adults as well, which is shocking, when most people who have college degrees know that it happens here but no one wants to admit it happens here. So, when we actually go into the classrooms and I see these youths, they will tell me “taken” the first day. Going through the 4-module curriculum and then having survivors on staff like FAIR Girls does go into the schools to tell their story and share their experiences with these youth—and some of them are basically saying that they are homeless now—we create a resource guide for every city that our curriculum is used in.

The resource guide has housing resources, food, clothing, transportation, medical services. Anything that the youth that may be living on the streets may need, our resource guide provides. But like I said, when there is no housing available—there has been times when we have slept in hotel lobbies with the girls—what exactly are we supposed to do to help them and keep them safe?

Their pimp is going to tell them, well, the service provider you are working with is not keeping you safe because you do not have a place to sleep tonight. We have girls who come to our office every day whom we work with who would do what they need to do, but the shelters do not have any beds for them. We tell them the same night, we will try to put you in a hotel if we have the funds for it.

But, if we do not have the funding, we do not have a place for these girls to go, and they are going right back to the pimps who are beating them, raping them, and selling them every day, because at least that pimp is providing them a place to sleep and food to eat. I went back several times because of that.

Senator PORTMAN. So you are providing them with what the warning signs might be, but also options.

Ms. GRAVES. Options. Resources.

Senator PORTMAN. Yes. Resources.

Ms. Guymon, and for that matter other panelists, I think one thing we have heard today loud and clear is that we should be treating young people who are, by appearances, engaging in prostitution as victims of exploitation. I think one step further, where this committee actually has a role to play, is ensuring that those victims are eligible to receive services as victims of child abuse in the child welfare system. Judge Katz said earlier also, we should be looking at these girls as survivors and not just as victims.

This committee does have jurisdiction here. Senator Hatch talked about it at the outset. We have jurisdiction over child welfare, State plans, for instance, and that is why this committee is an appropriate venue for this.

Research suggests, as we have heard today, that trafficked youth in the United States have typically been in and out of the child welfare system. In New York, 85 percent have prior child welfare involvement; in Florida, the estimate there for their task force is that 70 percent of the kids are foster youth. You talked about that, Ms. Graves. So there is definitely a connection here.

In an effort to break down some of these obstacles to care, last week Senator Wyden, who is here today, and I introduced a bipartisan bill, with support from a lot of members of this committee—including Senator Blumenthal who was here earlier and co-chairs the Human Trafficking Caucus—that basically requires that children who have been involved in sex trafficking be considered victims of abuse and neglect under CAPTA, which is the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

Another part of the bill requires that, after being informed that a child is missing from child welfare, law enforcement has to notify the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

So my question to you is, understanding that notification of a child missing varies a lot across this country, are there specific policies or practices that contribute to the lack of this standardized

reporting, and what can be done? You talked about collaborative efforts, and Judge Katz talked about a multi-jurisdiction effort. Does this legislation seem to make sense, and what can be done at a national level?

Ms. GUYMON. Yes, I think it obviously does make sense. I think the more we build those policies and do legislation for, again, mandated reporting and really having those policies and procedures in place, I think it helps direct States in what they need to do, especially with the child welfare system. I know I come from juvenile justice. I am not in the child welfare system in Los Angeles, but I do know that they are very much engaged in this issue.

They are working with the State to pass, like I said, new legislation in order to make their hot-line more productive and to be able to take these kids into the system and give them the services that they need that they have not really looked at in the past. I think, again, we just did not know better. Now that we do, we are trying to catch up and make sure that these kids are protected.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time has expired.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator, very much.

Senator PORTMAN. My time has expired, but I thank all of you for your work.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Well, once again, Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing. I thank all of our witnesses, and particularly I want to thank Ms. Graves.

We hear the numbers and statistics. We are shocked by the statistics, but, until you see a face and you recognize that each one of those numbers is a person whose life has been changed forever, it is hard to really visualize the extent of the problem. So I said in introducing you that you are a courageous person. You are making a huge difference by telling your story, and I just really want to thank you for that.

As you said, people do not want to acknowledge that they are homeless. Children do not want to acknowledge that they are homeless. They do not want to acknowledge that they do not have a family. They certainly do not want to acknowledge the type of background that you went through, and yet you are doing that. I just wanted you to know how important it is and how proud we are that you are here today.

I have been involved on international trafficking through the U.S. Helsinki Commission. The United States has taken a major leadership role to set up resources internationally to deal with trafficking. Our credibility is affected because we have not done enough locally, so we need to take care of our own business here at home. I think your point about resources for housing is a very valid point.

The first order of business is to have a safe home. Many of these children are in the child welfare system, but the child welfare system has failed, so we need to be able to have a fail-safe, a safe home, and the resources devoted to deal with that.

I want to ask you, though, the difficult question about safety. You were threatened, your family was threatened. You are talking

today with girls who are coming out, and you have a chance to meet with them. What is the confidence level of a person who has been trafficked for sex about coming forward to law enforcement as to the fear that they will endanger their personal safety, and the government, the community, will not provide the support necessary to protect them?

Ms. GRAVES. The first thing that comes to my mind is imminent death. In the past, that is what I would have thought of about 7 or 8 years ago. But now that I look at how the child—I mean, when I got out, I actually had caring law enforcement, a special agent, whom I still speak to to this day.

Almost 7 years later, I still speak to her, a Boston police officer, Sergeant Kelly O'Connell, whom I speak to to this day, every other week. We still check in with each other and make sure that I am doing fine. But if I was not on my death bed, I would not have gone to the hospital.

I know girls now, they do not trust law enforcement because there are no safe houses. What are they going to do? They are going to put the girls in DC in Covenant House in DC, and all the pimps know where the group homes are. They know where the detention centers are. There needs to be a specialized, private place where there is security, because, without security, who is going to protect these girls?

These girls are going to have to go to school, they are going to have to go and get a job eventually. These traffickers know where all these places are. I mean, luckily our office is a confidential location, but I am sure they know where the probation offices are.

If a girl is on probation, they know her probation officer. They can meet a girl outside her probation officer's office. Without law enforcement having the training that they need on trafficking—if a law enforcement officer is not trained on what trafficking is, they are going to say that a girl is a prostitute and she is a throw-away.

As a case manager—and people do not know that I am a survivor at all times—I have heard officers throw around the word “throw-away.” I have heard teachers say that a girl is a “throw-away,” that they are not worth the time. So, if a person is not even worth your time to listen to, how do you think that they are going to feel about coming forward and giving you information? I testified against my traffickers. I put six traffickers away, two of them for 25 years, because I had the proper support system of law enforcement and case managers. But most girls do not have that like I did.

Senator CARDIN. You experienced several pimps. What were their age ranges?

Ms. GRAVES. From 21 to 35. I was 16 at the time I met the first one, who was 23. But on average, they are a little bit older, usually in their early '30s.

Senator CARDIN. How difficult has it been to testify against pimps?

Ms. GRAVES. It was the scariest experience that I have ever experienced. It was more scary than this experience today. [Laughter.]

So for me, I look around at you guys, and I am like, well, they are not threatening my safety or threatening to harm me, so I can do this. For everything that scares me, I say: I testified in front of my traffickers; I put them away. Without me, that case would

never have gone to trial. None of the girls would have come forward. But when I came forward, other girls decided to stand up against my traffickers. We need people who are going to support the girls and care for them like we do at FAIR Girls.

Senator CARDIN. Well, you have done a great job here. I am glad that you are here, and thank you very much for your commitment to change our system.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Casey?

Senator CASEY. Ms. Graves and the other panelists, we are grateful for your testimony here. I was thinking, as I join in the commendation that other members of the committee have sent your way for your courage in being here today, of the greater measure of courage you have shown to come back from where you were.

One of the things we have in the Senate and in the House is the privilege of meeting soldiers after they have come off the battlefield. I think many of us would certainly put each of you in that league, as someone who has suffered so much, but is still able to look forward.

One of the most inspirational parts of your testimony is that you have figured out a way to take what happened to you yesterday and inspire others for tomorrow. We are in your debt for that.

You talked about three areas of change, number one being the critical funding to open specialized homes. Then you talked about this curriculum. I am not sure if you read this, Ms. Graves, but I wanted to recite it as well, where you talk about the education of young people. You say, "I have educated thousands of teen girls and boys in foster homes, schools, and detention facilities. This curriculum has educated over 4,000 teens nationwide." It goes on from there.

What would you hope would come from a hearing like this, or efforts that are undertaken here in the Senate, when it comes to just that part of it, educating young people?

Ms. GRAVES. Well, for me it would be to see our curriculum in every single school and every single system around the country, because our curriculum is broad, it is expansive, and it can be used in every other city. I know that we use our curriculum in Connecticut as well with an organization called LOVE146. They are teaching it in Connecticut schools and using the systems already in place in Connecticut. If every single city had something to identify victims in the schools, then that would be a key starting place.

Girls and boys are more likely to say, this is something that is happening to me, once they know that they are a victim. If you think that I am just a dirty, nasty person and there are other names—there is an activity we do called Power of Words. We ask the students and the teachers to come up with words to describe a prostitute and a sexually exploited teen. They come up with "nasty," "dirty," "trashy," "STD," other words to describe a prostitute. We sometimes put in the word "child prostitute," because people use that term often.

Then we put "sexually exploited teen" on the other side. You know what they say? "Sad," "lonely," "scared," "vulnerable," "manipulated," "unloved." For that one activity, that changes the mind-

set of a group of teenaged boys sometimes who use these terms and listen to music that denigrates women.

For them to say it is actually wrong, what happens to these girls, and to change their outlook, to me that is key. If I can save one victim, I am happy, because that would be one less person going through what I went through. If I could rescue 1,000 girls or a million girls, if our curriculum was in every single school district or a curriculum similar to it, it would actually save more children, because they will know that they are actually victims.

Senator CASEY. Well, I have no doubt your work has saved a lot of young people already.

For Ms. Guymon, Ms. Goldfarb, and Judge Katz, I guess as much as I was focused on prevention in that first question, the here and the now of law enforcement, when Ms. Graves talked about Sergeant Kelly O'Connell, what can we do to make sure that there are more Sergeant O'Connells?

In other words, when you deal with law enforcement on these issues, do they tell you that this is a capacity or resource question or is it simply a failure to coordinate or collaborate between and among one part of the State and law enforcement, or do you hear that they need more resources? What do you hear from law enforcement?

Judge KATZ. All of the above, frankly. I mean, for many departments, they need to be educated, and that is what we do. We go out and we meet with police departments throughout the State to educate them. Some of them do not even know about the legislation that was passed 2 years ago that said these young ladies are not to be arrested for prostitution, so it really is about education and training, and we do that.

I think the resource part comes in in terms of the prosecution. It is not dissimilar to them, I think, than arresting somebody for a small amount of drugs versus the dealer. Unless they see it as a real pattern of behavior in their locations, they feel that they are under-resourced to be able to really go after these cases. So, all of the above.

Senator CASEY. Thanks very much.

Ms. GOLDFARB. If I could, I would love to add to that, because I have the privilege of working with Sergeant Kelly O'Connell in Boston. I guess I would want to back up a little bit and say that Asia had the good fortune to meet Kelly, but at the moment that we were very first, as a community, beginning to even recognize that girls like Asia were out there. So the good fortune was that you met, but we were really just getting off the ground.

So I work in the same building with the detectives who manage our human trafficking cases, also together with a program called My Life, My Choice, which provides prevention education and mentoring for exploited youth. So our Children's Advocacy Center and our partners are located together.

What I observed in doing this work with Kelly, who is extraordinary, is that, when the police first started working with us and with our other partners, we were not on the same page. The police, Kelly among them—and she would admit this—thought that they would go out and rescue girls, that they would identify a girl and they would be able to scoop her up and take care of her needs.

The frustration of seeing that not happen, of seeing girls run away, of seeing girls reject the overtures that law enforcement and others were making, was really heartbreaking. I think what law enforcement in our community has learned is that part of the response from law enforcement, as well as others, begins with a relationship. So it is clear in listening to Asia that that relationship was founded when they met and is sustained now.

For law enforcement to look at their work in that way is distinctly different than I think the way they look at other crimes that they investigate. Setting that kind of model in place is something that all the disciplines—child welfare, law enforcement, mental health folks, and others—have to learn together because, with these kids, it is rooted in the relationship and having adults that these kids can count on in the long term, and realizing that we are not going to be able to rescue exploited youth but that we have to join them in their recovery and move forward in that way and hope that, along that recovery, there will be an opportunity to prosecute their traffickers.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Goldfarb, very much.

Senator CASEY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Casey.

Senator Wyden?

Senator WYDEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The four of you have been a superb panel. What is striking about it is, normally in this room we are talking about numbers and we are talking about tax law and charts and graphs. What you all have driven home and why we are so appreciative, Mr. Chairman, of your holding this hearing, is that it always comes back to people. It always comes back to individuals and young women.

Ms. Graves, you have delivered the wake-up call. You have conveyed the urgency of reform this morning. I am told by the staff that you want to go to law school. I have to say, the bad guys had better look out if you are going to be a lawyer. We are very appreciative of the good work that you do.

Now, here is what it comes down to for me. I think what really sparks Senator Portman and a number of colleagues who are supporting this bill is, in much of the country today, if a girl is found in the custody of a so-called pimp or even a john, she is not considered to be a victim of abuse.

That is just wrong. It defies common sense, and that is right at the heart of our bill, to amend Federal law to make sure that, in every corner of the country, child victims of sex trafficking are considered as victims of abuse and neglect.

Now, one of the other provisions speaks to a concern you all have described today, and a number of Senators have asked about it, which is, we have to get additional resources for treatment and for services. It was our view—when Senator Portman and I were trying to put this bill together and talking to Senators—that because we do not really have good numbers today about how many young women are being trafficked, that makes it harder to make the case to legislators and policymakers for getting the money for services and treatment.

What is your take on that? When we get the numbers—and the idea is to finally have the annual State report, because some States



do it, other States do not. When we get the numbers on the children identified as suspected victims of trafficking, will that help us make the case for additional money for services?

Perhaps for our middle two witnesses, Ms. Guymon and Ms. Goldfarb, what is your take on that? Will that help us get the dollars that we need for these treatment services that you all speak so eloquently about?

Ms. GUYMON. I think that, if one young woman is sexually exploited, that is enough to make a case. I know in Los Angeles County we are always asked the question about the numbers. On average, we have about 200 young women a year who are arrested and brought into juvenile justice. As I said, child welfare has recorded 70 thus far this year.

In our juvenile hall outreach programs we had, over the past year, 37 young women disclose that they were being sexually exploited who were never arrested for sexual exploitation and whom we had not identified. We also had, in 2010, from our 18- to 24-year-old population, in 1 year, 2,341 young women arrested for a prostitution-related offense.

So, when people ask about the numbers, I say anywhere between 37 and 2,351. Again, that one young woman who goes through this experience is, I think, enough to build a case that they are in need of services and support throughout all of our systems.

Senator WYDEN. Ms. Goldfarb, do you want to add to that?

Ms. GOLDFARB. So it is a little bit of a chicken and an egg because, in order to know what the numbers are, you have to increase awareness, which you hope will result in identification. But once you have identified an exploited youth, we need to be ready to provide the services that that child requires.

So waiting for the numbers will leave us with a dilemma, so I think there has to be capacity building at the same time that we are very deliberately making sure that professionals across disciplines are able to recognize these kids and report them.

I think that there are opportunities to build capacity within existing organizations. It is not necessarily creating lots of new systems, but I worry, as Michelle does, that if we wait until we have the numbers, kids will continue to be harmed. If we recognize their abuse and we are not able to provide the support they need, what is the message there? Then we have let them down yet again.

Senator WYDEN. It is a very powerful point. Clearly, when one child, just one young girl, falls between the cracks, that is one too many. I think what we are looking for are the tools to try to figure out how to make the case.

If I can just squeeze in one additional question, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Katz, you all in Connecticut seem to have really figured out how to put together a comprehensive strategy, so, when local jurisdictions around the country say, gee, we really do not know how to fix this, or we cannot get started, you all seem to have figured that out. How did you do it? What are the lessons for everybody else?

Judge KATZ. Well, I am a little late to the game, because I have only been there 2½ years, and some of the work started before me. But part of it was really shining a light on it and talking about it

at every possible venue. Anytime I testified before the legislature, I figured out a way to work this topic in.

Anytime I went around the State and I went to our offices, to our providers, to our hospitals, I figured out a way to make this part of the dialogue. Because, just like you are experiencing today, once you hear about it, you never forget it, and then you want to know what you can do to help.

So, frankly, that was a big part of it. I have wonderful partners at the legislature. I have a very supportive Governor. Frankly, I think it really is an issue of just people caring and then trying to be resourceful about it in response. It is not easy. We still have plenty of work to do, there is no question about it. It is not a quick fix.

I mean, that is the other thing. I think my partners here have talked about that. There is, I do not want to say, a relapse as part of the recovery, but you are not going to get these girls in and immediately fix everything for them. So part of the training has to be for people to understand trust.

When you find a young woman who has been involved in this system, to expect that suddenly she is going to thank you for everything you are going to do for her and suddenly trust you is really to ignore the reality that she has experienced. So it is a long process, and it takes an enormous amount of patience.

If I can just conclude with one other thought. Before, I was talking about the stick when I was talking about in rem proceedings, which are obviously a great way of trying to finance some of the things you want to try to do, and licensing at Super Bowl venues, et cetera. There is also a carrot.

So we are now in the process of developing specific foster families who understand these girls, whom we are going to train so that, when we find these girls, we can put them not just in shelters, not just in housing, but with families.

I am famous for saying at the department and around the State, I want children having breakfast in the morning with the same person who put them to bed the night before, and that is a family. So it is really about recruiting specific families whom we can train and work with. So that is where the incentives come in.

Frankly, as part of your legislation, if you can figure out a way to help States, to reimburse States for these new models, I think you will do an amazing job at helping to solve this problem.

Senator WYDEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator Nelson?

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all.

I want to read you an article, a portion of an article, involving my State. Florida is blessed to be a destination State—with theme park family vacations, business conferences, weddings, sporting events—and the natural beauty of our beaches entices thousands of visitors a day.

Unfortunately, Florida also draws visitors for a far less attractive reason: child sex trafficking. Our State is ranked third in the Nation, just behind California and Texas, for this dubious honor. The implication in a couple of these articles is that a lot of this takes place among visitors, conventioners, et cetera. To what degree,

Judge, in your experience, are hotels complicit in this activity, and to what degree do they know that this activity is going on and approve of it?

Judge KATZ. Well, I can certainly tell you anecdotally, we have casinos—and we have young victims who have told us that, despite all the security that is supposedly watching, casinos are used routinely, as are large concert halls, any kind of sporting venue. It is almost just implicit, for lack of a better term. It is implicit. There is an implicit understanding and a look-the-other-way that this goes on.

Senator NELSON. So the owners of these hotels or the managers of the hotels would obviously know that this illicit activity is going on, very possibly with children?

Judge KATZ. Yes. I would say know or should have known. In the law, that is a term that we frequently use. It is great for someone to say, I did not know, but then we turn to, but you should have known. When you are looking at everything else, and you are counting every spoon that is on the table and every beverage that is being taken behind the bar, why are you not paying attention to what is happening to these girls?

Senator NELSON. Do you have any recommendation of how this ought to be exposed, other than these attempts by local TV stations and the newspapers to bring this out?

Judge KATZ. Well, I hate to keep coming back to financial consequences, but money talks. I really think that that is a very viable way to get somebody's attention. Imposing fines, significant fines, will go a long way.

Senator NELSON. In your experience in Connecticut, are you seeing improvement in the reporting of these cases so that it will build the case all the more that this is happening right under our noses?

Judge KATZ. We are. Our CARELINE gets 96,000 calls a year. Now, that is obviously not just for this type of reporting. But our numbers are up, and I say that that is a good thing, because we know it is going on. So the more the numbers go up, the more we can attend to it and the better case that we can make.

Senator NELSON. Back to the hotels. In your experience in Connecticut, this is not fleabag motels. We are talking about high-end hotels as well.

Judge KATZ. Right. It is both, but definitely high-end hotels. I want to be clear that much of what we are learning is from the girls themselves. We have every reason to completely trust their accounting.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

I was wondering how best to reach young girls. Social networking is so prevalent these days, texting, Twitter. I guess they are called tweeters, tweeting. I do not use it, obviously. Facebook. But let me ask Ms. Graves and others the degree to which maybe—I do not know, I am just thinking out loud here—some kind of a website or something, someplace for girls to go to, might be helpful. They all have iPhones. They maybe do not trust a teacher, maybe do not trust a cop or something, but want to talk to somebody. I would ask the rest of you too about the use of social networking.

Ms. GRAVES. I would say that using social networking would be excellent, because you can see the warning signs. If you have a website dedicated to learning the warning signs through games, because I know that our Charm Alarm is—most girls do online quizzes to see if my boyfriend likes me, or, oh, our names are compatible, or what is my horoscope. I see this every day. Oh, what is my Facebook status? This is something that I hear from girls on a daily basis.

So, if we can create something and put a system in place for warning signs, red flags, things of that sort, to make it fun and catchy like our Charm Alarm is, I think that might be key to getting to these girls, because it is an online resource that girls can access through the Internet or through their phone.

Also, it looks like a regular quiz, so it does not look like anything dangerous. Each level, if you answer the questions one way—if you answer them with “yes,” “yes,” “yes,” “yes,” “yes,” like my boyfriend cares about me, my boyfriend is compassionate and sweet, or if you say “no” to all the answers, it gives you a level red. The level red means go to seek help immediately, that you are in a dangerous situation, and it gives you an emergency number in your area that you can reach out to.

I think that if all jurisdictions had something like this in place, that it could be sort of like Commissioner Katz does, like if the Charm Alarm quiz could have Connecticut’s information in place for a youth who may be in sensitive situations so they can reach out directly through that quiz, but send a text message or send a tweet on Twitter to whatever services they need.

If all these services were mobile-based, they could be Facebook friends with the Department of Children’s Services and make a report through the Department of Children’s Services that way instead of actually having to call in because they may not be able to use their phone.

I mean, I am sure there are people in this room right now who are on their phones, but you cannot hear them because they are not speaking. So I mean, something like that in place would probably be key, I think.

The CHAIRMAN. So would the girls trust these, like Charm Alarm and all that?

Ms. GRAVES. It is the Internet. The Internet is the best thing in the world. Without the Internet, I know that for me, even as a 25-year-old, without my phone for about 2 days, I went through iPhone withdrawal and had to go to Starbucks when our power went out last summer just to charge my phone so I could see my social networking and things like that.

The CHAIRMAN. Other panelists, how best do we use social networking? Is that useful?

Ms. GUYMON. I would say Asia pretty much covered that, but I also would like to say, too, outside of social networking, which I think has been talked about here, is prevention efforts within the community. I know that they have talked about a curriculum.

I know that we have done that in Los Angeles through the My Life, My Choice curriculum that we have. We have given the curriculum to almost 700 young women over the last year, and, through those classes and through those workshops, I think it has

been a great—young women are asking if they can bring their friends. I think they talk to each other, and I think they want to know, and I think they have a right to know.

I also want to say through that curriculum, I think one of the most important things that we are doing in Los Angeles is incorporating survivors in a lot of the work that we do. I think that is just invaluable.

Within our department, we have had to change some of our policies and rules for some of the young women and adult survivors to come in and do mentorship and whatnot with our young girls. But I think they are the primary facilitators of a lot of the prevention efforts we are doing, which I think has made a huge difference in our county and with connection with a lot of our young people.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hatch?

Senator HATCH. Well, I have really enjoyed this panel. Maybe enjoyment is not the word, but I have really learned from this panel. I have been reading up on this, and I have to say that your time here has been well-spent.

Now, you have made a lot of suggestions here today, and we are going to pay attention to those, but let me ask each of you to just sum up for us, if you had just one choice that you could make that we could help you with, what would you choose?

Let us start with you, Asia, and go across. I have appreciated your testimony very much, by the way. I think you are a brave person, and it is wonderful to see you finish up in college and hopefully go to law school. It will be a great thing, so we are proud of you.

But if you had just one thing that we could do within, say, this next year, that you think would be really helpful and make a difference here, what would you choose?

Ms. GRAVES. For me, it would be doubling the number of beds. Currently, from my last check, there were less than 100 beds around the country for victims, dedicated to victims.

Senator HATCH. That is unbelievable to me.

Ms. GRAVES. Dedicated.

Senator HATCH. I mean, that is hard to believe. So it includes education so people realize we are not doing the job here.

Ms. GRAVES. With less than 100 beds, in LA alone they found more victims. We have identified at FAIR Girls way more victims than 100. If we just had the 100 beds in DC, that would not even cover all the girls that we reach per year.

So, if you think about that, just in one city alone—and that is spread out through the country. We are fighting for these beds with other organizations. If you are a small nonprofit that does not have connections with this place or that place, you may not get a bed for your girls.

So why do we have to fight for beds? There should be enough beds to go around. A girl should not have to choose sleeping with a man for a place to sleep for the night or a place in a nice bed where she feels safe. I have girls every day who have to make the decision: sleep outside or sleep with a man.

Senator HATCH. Or sleep in the hospital like you did.

Ms. GRAVES. But hospitals have tightened their strings.

Senator HATCH. And only one night. Yes.

Ms. GRAVES. They have tightened their strings so you cannot do that anymore because of the medication, and they are afraid of other people being in the hospital, if you are not a patient, after certain hours. But if you think about it, having to make a decision like that at 12 years old, some girls even younger—we had a client whom I saw when I first got to FAIR Girls not too long ago who was 10 years old who still played with Barbie dolls, stickers, and glitter. Luckily, she was able to go to a hospital, the Psychiatric Institute of Washington, and stay there for a while to get her stuff together.

But that is not always an option for girls who are almost 17 years old, because most foster homes do not want to take them, most group homes do not want to take them because of their age. So what do we tell these young ladies every day? What are you going to tell the members in your district, when you have a young victim in your district, that there is no bed for you? That is just my one thing.

Senator HATCH. That is good.

Ms. Guymon?

Ms. GUYMON. I would echo what Asia said. I think housing is probably the biggest obstacle we have. But I would also say that child welfare should be given the resources needed in order to provide those services and have those resources for young children so that we can get to a place where we absolutely decriminalize these young girls so that they do not come into the probation system.

I think it just gives, like I say, young girls the wrong message. We are trying to work with them as victims, and they often look at us like, well, if I am a victim, why am I in a juvenile hall? So I think we have to work towards decriminalization and then really support the child welfare system to set up the services needed to support this population.

Senator HATCH. All right.

Ms. Goldfarb?

Ms. GOLDFARB. I would echo what Michelle has said. I really believe that, if child welfare across the country really was considering these kids to be among their kids and had the policies and regulations to support that and the training to be able to implement trauma-informed care, that that would really be a first step that would yield incredible benefits, because it would be the first step in tying together the recovery response with the whole system.

Senator HATCH. Thank you.

Judge Katz, let us finish with you.

Judge KATZ. I do not think I can improve upon what has already been said. I just want to highlight the trauma-informed care, because these girls—and largely girls, but not exclusively—have all been victims of trauma, and we need to be very mindful of that in everything we do. But we also cannot underestimate the value of the influx and infusing of money for purposes of training and educating people.

Then finally, I think what you have done today, you have really begun the process. I do not mean to sound pandering, but I think the more attention you can put on this and the more you raise awareness, you will have done an enormous amount to advance the cause.

Senator HATCH. Well, thank you so much. I want to thank all four of you. This has been dramatic testimony. It has been effective testimony. It has been social testimony that is very important, I think. I hope a lot of people have been watching this.

We will see what we can do. I remember when Senator Kennedy and I came together on the AIDS issue. Everybody was afraid of it. I think they are probably a little bit afraid of this too. But I told him, we have to do something about this. This is terrible. Oh, yes, yes, he was ready to go. But, when we brought it to the floor, we had a really rough time at first. We finally passed it, then we passed two others that have made a real difference.

Now, we have to have the best advice you can give us. Write to us and help us to know what we can do to hopefully comprehensively help in this area. I agree, I do not think the States are doing what they should in this area, but a lot of it is because they are lacking the funds too. They are lacking the education, they are lacking the training, they are lacking a lot of things, maybe even law enforcement.

They are lacking the understanding that these kids are not criminals, they are exploited. So help us to know how to do this better so we do not go off on just one or two routes to try to solve this problem. Help us to do it so we can do it in a comprehensive and decent way. I know that the chairman and I will do everything in our power to try to help in this area.

So I just want to thank you all for being here. It means a lot to me, and I think to every family in this country, every social worker, religious worker, and so forth. Their hearts have to go out to you for what you are doing. We all owe you a debt of gratitude and thanks.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

I am trying to get a better handle on decriminalization. I suppose in many States, prostitution is a crime, but coerced sex is not. So how does law enforcement better determine that a young girl is not a prostitute but that she has been coerced? Is that an issue or not an issue? It is obvious to me that forced sex should not be a crime. That is clear. What is the issue here about decriminalization? Maybe somebody can help me out a little bit. Judge?

Senator HATCH. Start with the age, I would think.

Judge KATZ. I absolutely would begin with the age. Think about the inconsistency. In most jurisdictions, children under the age of, sometimes 18, sometimes 16, certainly at least 16, are deemed incapable of consenting. So we prosecute, even in boyfriend/girlfriend situations. We prosecute young men for having sex with underaged girls. In Connecticut, it is sexual assault in the second degree, because they are incapable of consenting.

But yet, to turn around then when it is a different type of girl, a girl who has been trafficked, and then to say to her, but you are a prostitute, I mean, the inconsistency is blatant. So I think beginning certainly with age is very, very easy. Enhancing the penalties certainly is very, very easy, in my view. I mean, these are quick fixes, and I would certainly begin there.

The CHAIRMAN. But can States not do this? Can States not make this change?

Judge KATZ. States can, and I would invite them to continue to do so, as Connecticut has.

The CHAIRMAN. All right.

Ms. GUYMON. And I think, just overall as a society, we have always accepted prostitution. I know that growing up, when I would hear the word "prostitute," a 24-year-old woman's face would come to my mind. But again, working in custody in juvenile halls and in camps, we had 16-year-olds who were arrested for prostitution. Again, I just assumed that this is what she chose to do, and I just put her in a category.

I know driving down some of our streets in LA, you would see young women out there. Again, just dismissing it, thinking, well, that is what she chooses to do, and I will just stay out of it and I will do my thing. So I think for a long time, I think as a society, we have just kind of accepted it and driven past it, and it is not my issue, it is not my problem.

So I think I felt that way until I became aware that it was not about prostitution, teenaged prostitutes, it was really that they were being sexually exploited, because, again, sex trafficking only happened in other countries. So I think it was just easy for me to wrap my head around that this was something I just was not going to be involved in. Now that we know better, I think things will start to change.

The CHAIRMAN. Right. I know it is hard to generalize, but in LA do law enforcement officers know the difference? I mean, are they sensitized or not?

Ms. GUYMON. I think they are starting to know the difference. I know that the Los Angeles Police Department has taken on a real training initiative within all the different LAPD stations, as well as our sheriff's department. I think that is slowly starting to change. I think it has not always been there.

I think probably the biggest frustration for law enforcement is, it is easy to arrest and detain, because I think they feel like that is the only option to keep her safe from running right back. I think they are more conscious about keeping her safe. I think that is why it is so important for us to build other programs and other services so we do not just default to detention, to know that other people can keep her safe and provide that security. So I think we are getting there.

The CHAIRMAN. I was going to ask that question too. That is, clearly follow-up is essential. So what are you doing to follow up with these girls who come in? Maybe you found a bed and they can stay there at that site, but they are obviously going to need some support services; they probably have no father or mother. Their mother is probably on crack or heroin, all that. So what are you doing about follow-up to keep them from straying again?

Ms. GUYMON. I think the biggest part of follow-up we are doing in Los Angeles is, we are just trying to build a support system around her. I think what we have done throughout a lot of the training, especially with our foster homes and with our group homes, is really about building connection.

We know that when these young girls run, we have not provided that support and security for her. So we just talk a lot about stick-



ing with kids and not giving up, and, when she runs, we take her back and we really build those support networks around her.

I think, again, like someone said earlier, it is about relationships, it is about connection and really trying to make sure that we are there for her and that we do not let her down.

I think that is really a lot of what we have tried to do in Los Angeles, with connections and support and building a network of people with collaboration around the young girl.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much. I am very proud of all four of you. You work hard in what you do. You care. You, Ms. Graves, you are very articulate. When you do go to law school, you are obviously going to do what you want to do, but I encourage you to continue to be a voice for girls who are in your situation, your former situation, because you have the experience, you have the passion, you are articulate, and you are committed.

I just urge you, and all of you, to just keep it up. This has been quite a hearing. This is quite something for the Finance Committee, frankly. We have learned a lot, and we are going to follow up. But thank you so much for your efforts and for what you are doing. You are making a big difference for a lot of kids. Thank you.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12 p.m., the hearing was concluded.]



# APPENDIX

## ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

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### **Hearing Statement of Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.) On Preventing Sex Trafficking in Foster Care *As prepared for delivery***

Abraham Lincoln said, "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong."

Slavery in any form is an injustice that we must stop. Our country has fought long and bloody wars to end slavery, both at home and abroad. Unfortunately, not all forms of slavery have been abolished in America. Human trafficking, which includes both labor and sex trafficking, is not unique to third-world countries. It exists right here in America.

It is quickly becoming one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world. Twenty-seven million people are bought and sold into slavery each year, many of them children.

At least 100,000 children are exploited every year in the United States. Most of these kids are only between 12 and 14 years old.

This committee has jurisdiction over the nation's foster care and adoption system. Today we will focus our attention on the children most vulnerable to trafficking predators – foster children.

Fifty to eighty percent of the children that are exploited and sold each year in America are connected to the foster care system. The tough background and unstable upbringing of many foster youth increases their risk of exploitation.

These children frequently suffer from a history of emotional, physical and sexual abuse. They are typically moved from place to place with little or no warning. These factors combined with a desire for love and affection and a lack of appropriate adult supervision increase their risk of exploitation. However, all young people can become victims of this crime.

We will hear today from a survivor of this horrific crime. Miss Asia Graves will share with us her first-hand experience.

This abuse even occurs in my home state of Montana, which I often refer to as one big small town. It's a place where we pride ourselves on old-fashioned values – a place where we know our neighbors and look out for each other – and yet we are not immune.

I'll share the story of one Montanan, a young woman we will refer to as Kay. Kay was born and raised in a solid family from Kalispell. She was an exceptional young person with everything in place for a bright future.

At 15, she met a handsome and charismatic man at a high school party. He slipped a drug into her drink. He sold Kay for sex in exchange for money and drugs.

We can't imagine her horror upon waking. She wasn't the same. She had no one to turn to. The young man used her fear and depression to isolate her. Kay became addicted to heroin and was repeatedly sold to her own peers for drugs and money.

Thanks to Windie Jo Fischer, a local outreach worker, Kay was able to escape. Windie knew what Kay was going through because she had survived a similar experience at age 13. Today, Kay is doing well. Still, too many young women just like Kay continue to suffer every day.

The Bakken oil boom in Montana and North Dakota has brought thousands of jobs and economic activity to the area. But the population spike has also brought increased crime – drugs, gun crimes and prostitution. Victims are difficult to identify, and they are often coerced and threatened into silence.

Difficulty is not an excuse for inaction.

We cannot sit by and allow any more children to suffer in silence. These are our sons and our daughters. It's our job to protect them.

That is what today's hearing is all about. We are here to expose this horrific problem and find out what more we should be doing to keep our kids safe.

Too often, sexually exploited children have nowhere to go for help. The people they turn to don't know how to handle these cases.

As a result, sex trafficking victims are often arrested and placed in juvenile detention. But raped and abused children should not be treated as criminals.

The juvenile justice system is making progress, but law enforcement needs the help and expertise of social workers, mental health professionals, judges and teachers to find the right solutions for vulnerable children.

It is time for the child welfare system to do its part to end sex trafficking. Today's witnesses will tell us about the limitations of the current system to help victims.

As a nation, we have a responsibility to protect our girls and boys. People who are buying and selling our children must be stopped. As Lincoln said, "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." For as long as slavery exists in any form, we must fight to end it.

Before we move on to introducing our panel, I'd like to remind Senators that around 10:30 we will turn to the nomination of Michael Froman. Mr. Froman is nominated to be the United State Trade Representative. He testified before this Committee last Thursday, and responded to 150 questions for the record over the weekend. I believe Mr. Froman is the right man to lead USTR and lead our ambitious trade agenda. He deserves our support.

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**CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER**  
*of suffolk county*

**Testimony  
of  
Susan Goldfarb  
Executive Director  
Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County  
Support to End Exploitation Now (SEEN) Coalition**

**U.S. Senate Committee on Finance  
Hearing on Sex Trafficking and Exploitation in America:  
Child Welfare's Role in Prevention and Intervention**

Good morning Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Hatch and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the invitation to join you today.

I am Susan Goldfarb, executive director of the Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County, a Boston-based organization dedicated to healing and justice for child and teen victims of exploitation and abuse, and chair of the Support to End Exploitation Now (SEEN) Coalition.

As the director of the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) and as a professional working in the field of child abuse for more than 25 years, I am grateful for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

Across the United States, Children's Advocacy Centers provide a comprehensive, multidisciplinary response for child victims of sexual abuse and serious physical abuse. CAC's unite social workers, prosecutors, police, victim advocates, and medical & mental health professionals to ensure that child victims are afforded safety and services – and that the adults who hurt them are held accountable. But today, across the country child victims of commercial sexual exploitation are not afforded this crucial safety net or the benefits of this comprehensive approach.

**An Effective Response to Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children**

The commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a crime of systemized brutality and sexual assault that is deliberately waged on children with prior histories of neglect, abuse, isolation and vulnerability.<sup>1</sup> Historically, these children have been labeled "child prostitutes", treated as criminals and, perhaps even worse, ignored altogether.

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<sup>1</sup> From "The Life" to My Life: Sexually Exploited Children Reclaiming Their Futures / Suffolk County Massachusetts' Response to Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC), Suzanne Piening, LICSW, PhD and Theodore Cross, PhD, May 2012

In Boston, a young woman's murder and a growing recognition of this invisible and underserved population spurred the creation of the Support to End Exploitation Now Coalition (SEEN), an initiative of the Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County, the Office of Suffolk County District Daniel F. Conley, and over 35 governmental and community-based organizations dedicated to providing effective, coordinated interventions for exploited youth and to improving the system's response to commercial sexual exploitation.

SEEN was created in to establish a collaborative and multidisciplinary response to commercial sexual exploitation that

1. empowers youth to leave their exploiter and utilize opportunities to regain control of their future,
2. ensures the physical and psychological safety of exploited youth,
3. ensures youths' access to resources and services,
4. enforces offender accountability by apprehending and prosecuting adults who exploit children, and
5. addresses the larger social issues impacting at-risk youth.

The SEEN model is clear in its assertion that commercial sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse – not delinquency - and that exploited youth are child victims. Thus, as with other forms of child abuse, youth-serving professionals have a legal responsibility to report commercial sexual exploitation to child protective services. This report of commercial sexual exploitation to child welfare has multiple implications: 1) It documents the exploitation and ensures that the abuse is not ignored, 2) it provides access to needed support and services, and 3) in Massachusetts, and many other states, it triggers an immediate referral to the district attorney and law enforcement for investigation and a coordinated, multi-agency response. In short, mandated reporting launches the safety net.

Child victims of commercial sexual exploitation have complex needs. The basic premise of the SEEN response model is that, in order to meet these needs, exploitation victims should have immediate access to and ongoing support from an array of providers including: child protective services, law enforcement, medical providers, legal advocates, youth workers, survivor mentors, and others, and that this early and collaborative response enhances evidence collection, improves coordination for multi-jurisdictional investigations, and is critical to providing an effective continuum of services. No single agency can do this work alone.

Collaboration, alone, is not enough. An effective response must also include: 1) training to increase awareness and knowledge about exploitation and its impact; 2) training to be able to identify victimized children and to know how to respond; and 3) development of clear, multidisciplinary protocols to ensure that all professionals not only report suspected exploitation but also work collaboratively across disciplines to ensure victim safety, provide services and hold adult exploiters accountable.

In my own community, these children were long invisible. In the 3 years preceding the

implementation of the SEEN model, we received a total of only 7 referrals regarding commercially sexually exploited children.

However, since SEEN was launched in 2005, hundreds of professionals have been trained, protocols have been established and more than 700 sexually exploited and high risk youth have been identified and referred (more than 100 per year in Suffolk County, alone).

In our community, exploited youth are invisible no more and we now know what we have long suspected: these children are among the most vulnerable:

- Approximately 65% have a history of running away;
- Upwards of 70% have a history of abuse and/or neglect and child welfare involvement; and
- Almost 60% of the children were 15 years old or *younger* at the time of referral;

Traffickers know and exploit this vulnerability. It is our responsibility both to prevent the exploitation and to intervene more effectively on behalf of trafficked youth.

#### **The Critical Role of Child Welfare**

So, how can we do this? Today's hearing is focused on child welfare's role in preventing and responding to sex trafficking. Commercial sexual exploitation of children is child abuse and I believe that child welfare agencies are and will continue to be at the center of preventing exploitation and responding to the needs of this population. In Boston, the Department of Children and Families has been a key partner and a leader in developing our multidisciplinary model and specialized services for exploited youth.

A growing number of other communities and a few states have made great gains in developing programs, instituting policies and changing statutes to recognize exploited youth as child victims and to begin to address their complex needs. Eleven states, including my own, have passed Safe Harbor legislation to ensure that exploited youth are treated as victims and have access to needed services.

This progress is hopeful, but it is not enough. Commercial sexual exploitation knows no jurisdictional boundaries. Children are victimized in every state and moved from state to state by their exploiters. It makes no sense that a child exploited in one city or state will be treated as a victim while a child in another community can still be arrested and blamed for his or her victimization.

#### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

##### **1. Mandatory Reporting of Commercial Sexual Exploitation:**

In the majority of states, commercial sexual exploitation continues to go unreported to child welfare. A few states have amended their child abuse reporting laws to include sexual exploitation as a "reportable condition" requiring professionals to contact child protective

services when exploitation is suspected. Commercial sexual exploitation is child abuse and should be reported, as such, in all states.

2. Lack of Data:  
When commercial sexual exploitation is reported to child protective services, most child welfare databases classify the reports as sexual abuse or neglect; there is no category for allegations of commercial sexual exploitation. As a result, there is no mechanism or coding to collect data regarding the number of these cases or the services provided to these children.
3. Limitations to Child Welfare Serving All Exploited Children:  
In most states, child welfare becomes involved only when an alleged offender is in a caretaking role. A pimp is not considered a caretaker – so the majority of exploitation reports are “screened out”. All exploited youth do not receive child welfare services. A few states have expanded the scope of their screening to include adult caretakers who have a child under his or her control. This change allows exploited youth – who have no familial caretaker in their life – to receive the support and services of child welfare.
4. Training and Development of Agency Protocols:  
Child welfare agencies are already serving these children – whether the commercial sexual exploitation is recognized, or not. Agency-wide training is needed to ensure universal screening, victim identification, understanding of the exploited child’s experience and trauma-informed service planning. Policies are needed to ensure timely interagency communication and collaboration between child welfare, law enforcement and others when investigating and responding to concerns of exploitation.
5. Multidisciplinary Collaboration:  
On average, each child victim of commercial sexual exploitation is involved with 3-4 agencies, including child welfare, juvenile justice, criminal justice, health care, family support and others. There is a critical need for consistency, communication and coordination across agencies and systems. All communities should establish interagency policies and procedures to ensure coordination among agencies. Children’s advocacy centers across the nation are experts in facilitating collaboration on behalf of abused children and are a ready resource to advance this work.

These are achievable changes. There is an astonishing level of public interest in sex trafficking of children and a growing body of knowledge regarding best practices. We have an opportunity to leverage this interest and expertise and make real changes that will, honestly, restore and save lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.



**Statement by Sen. Charles E. Grassley**

Senate Finance Committee

**“Sex Trafficking and Exploitation in America:  
Child Welfare’s Role in Prevention and Intervention”**

Tuesday, June 11, 2013

Domestic human trafficking is a serious issue, and one that should concern every member of the Senate. It happens in every state. Hundreds of Iowans have fallen victim to trafficking. We must continuously reflect on how to prevent the crime and how to help the victims and prosecute the criminals when it does happen.

Research indicates that most victims of domestic trafficking, or sex trafficking, into and within the United States are women and children. Among the various serious issues that sex trafficking raises, those involving children should be dealt with first as the foremost priority. Sex trafficking of children appears to be fueled by a variety of environmental and situational variables, including poverty or the use of prostitution by runaway and so-called "thrown-away" children to provide for their subsistence needs. There are various reasons for sex trafficking, and prevention is the obvious key to protecting innocent women and children.

Domestic trafficking often occurs when a girl is targeted as vulnerable and is subsequently preyed upon by criminals seeking to exploit her. Some girls in foster care, because of the trauma they have sustained and because they often lack meaningful connections, are particularly vulnerable to the advances of predators. Often, the predator is the only person who pays attention and offers support and validation to these vulnerable young adults. The fact they are very susceptible to being trafficked is a reflection of the systemic problems inherent in our child welfare system.

In 2009, Senator Landrieu and I created a caucus where the voices of older youth in foster care could be heard. The issues facing older youth in foster care are complex and span the jurisdiction of many congressional committees. We created the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth to better understand the plight of foster youth and how Congress could pave the way for positive changes to benefit this vulnerable population. A number of policy suggestions from our “Call To Action” set of suggestions have been carried out via regulatory or statutory changes.

In the past, the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth has hosted a speaker series. One particular event, held in March of 2012, provided valuable guidance on how to approach the difficult issues involving sex trafficking of children. Survivors shared their courageous stories and experiences. Law enforcement individuals identified the challenges they face when victims

enter the juvenile justice system. And those who built alternative programs for children involved in sex trafficking shared their goals, best practices, and solutions to help identify and help youth.

The event we held last year, along with other work conducted by the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, help people to understand that these girls not criminals. For girls who are connected to both the child welfare and the juvenile justice systems, there are very few alternatives for placements and services. If they are returned to the foster home, more often than not, they will run away. On the other hand, incarceration or detention sends an inappropriate message to these girls that they are criminals, not victims. Also, in most cases, incarceration fails to connect these girls with the medical and psychological services they need.

They are girls who, because they were removed from their homes and placed in the foster care system as wards of the state, are uniquely our responsibility. The failure to address the needs of these girls is symptomatic of the failure of the current child welfare system. We lack an adequate comprehensive strategy to address their victimization. Simply put, we need to improve the system in order to appropriately and effectively address the needs of all the children and youth who enter or have interaction with the child welfare system.

In addition to prevention efforts, we're here today to understand the consequences and the solutions to getting women and children out of sex trafficking circles. As we work over the next few years to enact comprehensive child welfare reform, we cannot neglect to include strategies to address the root causes and solutions to domestic trafficking of girls out of the foster care system.

I thank the Chairman for holding today's hearing on this very important matter.

**The Senate Finance Committee**

Hearing:

*Sex Trafficking and Exploitation in America: Child Welfare's  
Role in Prevention and Intervention*

Written Testimony for

**Asia Graves**

Maryland Program Coordinator & Survivor Advocate FAIR  
Girls

Tuesday, June 11, 2013

I would like to thank Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Hatch and the Senate Finance Committee for giving me the chance to testify at today's hearing "Sex Trafficking and Exploitation in America: Child Welfare's Role in Prevention and Intervention." My name is Asia Graves, and I am the prevention education coordinator for FAIR Girls and a survivor of domestic minor sex trafficking in America. It is an honor to have this opportunity to speak to you about what human trafficking looks like here domestically, how trafficking interacts with the child welfare system and to make you understand that a girl who is involved in human trafficking is a victim in need of long-term compassionate services. She is not a prostitute or criminal. I would first like to start out by telling you my story of surviving sex trafficking. I believe that I am one of the lucky few because I received the care and support I needed to overcome my past. Then, I would like to share with you the work I do at FAIR Girls to find and empower hundreds of more girl survivors of sex trafficking right here in the nation's capital.

As a survivor of sex trafficking, I no longer consider myself to be a victim. While the average age of entry into sex trafficking in America is only 13 years old, my life as a victim of sex trafficking began at age 16. An age where I should have been going to school dances and slipping notes to my friends during class. Long before my exploitation began, I was already battling things no child should experience. I did not have a positive support system, my family could not care for me, and the teachers and social workers who met me did not see the warning signs. By the time my pimp sold me, I was isolated and scared, which is exactly what most girls feel as they fall victim.

At 16, I was living with my mother who was addicted to crack cocaine and herself a victim of years of abuse. I didn't know what else to do, so I moved in with my father who was an alcoholic. I did not know my life would turn upside down. My dad told me that I had to pay \$900 in rent each month or I'd be thrown out. How was I supposed to do that at age 16? I got a job working as many hours as I could, and I even missed school. When I could not pay his rent, my father throw me out.

So with no place to go I moved in with a group of girls who were staying in a one bedroom apartment. They tried to convince me to sell my body for sex to pay their rent. It was January 2004, and one of the biggest snow storms ever in Boston. But, I refused and started to walk in downtown Boston with nowhere to go and nowhere to sleep.

As I walked, a guy who looked about my age pulled up in a car and offered to help me. He said I was too pretty to be out in the snow. I had nowhere to go, so I said yes. The thought of him taking care of me and having a place to live was like a dream to me. The first week was like being in a fairytale full of romance, good food, and a place to sleep. But, then things changed.

After a week he told me that he was a pimp and I was his property. When I told him I wanted to leave, he beat me for the first time. Then, he called an escort service who took naked pictures of me and put them on their website. Men came to the hotel and had sex with me. He told me he would kill me or let these men kill if I did not have sex. Two weeks later he took me to the track, which is a place where pimps sell girls like me, and made me work all night – rain or snow, even if I was sick. He said that if I didn't then he would kill my family. He sold me to several other pimps that had sex with me and forced me to have sex with other men. My story is sad, but it's common. And, girls like me are all around, but people don't see them so they remain victims.

Three years passed. Pimp after pimp, beating after beating, and feeling like I'd never get free. And, feeling like maybe I was not worth this world. I didn't even feel I was worth a \$3 happy meal. After being beaten, hit in the head with an iron, and sexually assaulted with a hairbrush I had enough. And, I was pregnant. I wanted my baby. I wanted to have someone who would love me for me. I tried to run but was held hostage at gunpoint. When I finally escaped I spoke to the first officer that I could find. My traffickers took out their revenge on me. I thought I was safe staying with a friend, but the next morning my traffickers sent four women with steel-toed Timberland boots to assault me. They knew I was pregnant, and they kicked me all over my stomach and left me beaten on the sidewalk. I lost my baby, and I felt like garbage. I could have died, but something inside me said to fight. So, I walked to the nearest police station and a police woman named Sgt. Kelly O'Connell met me at the door. She knew my trafficker. During the interview, I started to miscarry and Sgt. O'Connell rushed me to the emergency room. Honestly, I feel blessed to have found Sgt. O'Connell and to have a group of investigators to believe in me and my story.

I did not wake up one morning and say that I wanted to be a prostitute. No girl does. And, there is no such thing as a "child prostitute" because legally children

cannot consent to be sold for sex. No girl chooses to be a slave. Yet, girls like me are the face of modern day slavery in America.

You might ask how this can be possible. Here is how. 80 to 90% of victims of trafficking have been sexually abused. That is my story, too. I was raped by my mother's drug dealers from the ages of 6 to 10 years old, which made me vulnerable to trafficking. I went to school and told my teachers as well as a school social worker who just believed that I was making it up. I stopped asking for help. My life as an American victim of modern day slavery could have been prevented.

Over the past five years, a strong team of women leaders, including Sgt. O'Connell, have helped me rebuild my life. They kept me safe. They stood by my side as a testified against six traffickers. I wish this had never happened to me. I wish no girl or boy was sold into sex trafficking. Yet, all this pain has led me to being able to truly empathize with each of the hundreds of girls who come to FAIR Girls every year. I hope someday to be a lawyer, and take my past and use my work at FAIR Girls to truly ensure fewer girls fall victim to sex trafficking.

I am going to be honest with you right now. The state child welfare system failed me as a child. How is it possible a straight A student like myself went missing and no one reported it? What about all those social workers and foster homes where I was abused and beaten?

To start, we need three critical changes. First, critical funding is needed to open specialized homes where girls sold into sex trafficking. Second, every social worker and teacher should be educated on how to see the red flags of trafficking and report and help a victim. Third, every high risk youth, most notably girls inside the child welfare system, need to be educated on how to stay safe from sex trafficking.

First, we need critical funding to open specialized homes where girls and boys sold into trafficking can truly receive the compassionate care they deserve. Often times at FAIR Girls, we have nowhere for these young girls to go. We do our best with our partners, but many times we are hiding in hotels while looking for safe house. This is not how a victim of slavery who has just been freed should spend her first night. FAIR Girls and many social service agencies nationwide have the staff and vision to create specialized safe houses, but we need the resources to launch and sustain them. And, I think you could help us make that happen.

Second, every social worker and teacher needs to be educated how to identify and assist child victims of sex trafficking. FAIR Girls is a member of the DC Anti Trafficking Task Force, and we have educated hundreds of law enforcement, social workers, and educators in victim identification. We can only truly keep American children safe if their adult support systems are educated and given the tools they need to understand the warning signs before a child is victimized. I often wonder what could have happened if one of my teachers or social workers had intervened and taken action to help me before I was sold by pimps all over America. This is not expensive training, but it's life saving.

Third, children, their teachers, and their social workers need to be educated nationwide on how to stay safe from sex trafficking. As the prevention education coordinator at FAIR Girls, I have educated 1000s of teen girls and boys in foster homes, schools, and detention facilities. This curriculum has educated over 4,000 teens nationwide. Children in the child welfare system are most at risk and absolutely have to be educated on how to avoid being sold into sex trafficking. Had someone like me come to my school when I was 16, maybe my story of exploitation would never have happened. Recently, one young teen mom recently came to me saying she was being pressured by her older "boyfriend" to strip because she needed the money. I was able to join up with her school teacher and child welfare advocate to stop her fall into sex trafficking. FAIR Girls has hundreds of stories just like hers. We work closely with the DC and Maryland child welfare agencies, and this evidence-based partnership model could be emulated nationwide with the right resources.

I appreciate the opportunity today to speak before you. And there are many more stories that I would like to share, as I believe passionately in the rights of the girl survivors that we serve at FAIR Girls. And I am very open to questions. I consider today the beginning of a wonderful dialogue that will lead to creating new resources to help girls just like me.



**Testimony by Ms. Michelle Guymon  
Probation Director  
Los Angeles County**

**Senate Committee on Finance**

**June 11, 2013**

**Hearing: "Sex Trafficking and Exploitation in America: Child Welfare's  
Role in Prevention and Intervention"**



Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for raising awareness of child sex trafficking and exploitation in America. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Michelle Guymon and I am a Probation Director in Los Angeles County, the largest county in the nation. I have worked in LA County for nearly 25 years in our Probation Department.

Today, I would like to tell you about how I, as a member of the juvenile justice system, began working on this issue, and how probation is beginning to partner with child welfare to both prevent this crime and safeguard the survivors since so many children who fall victim to commercial sexual exploitation have had prior contact with the child welfare system.

In 2010, as part of my role in our Probation Department, I was serving on our County's Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect. I was asked by a judge to be a part of a sub-committee on sex trafficking. While I had no idea why a probation officer, or our department, would be involved in human trafficking, I thought great – I love to travel – who wouldn't want to go to Thailand, Indonesia, or Cambodia?

Then came November 16, 2010. I remember the date so vividly because it was a day that changed my life. It was the first meeting of the Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking sub-committee. It was here that I learned that this exploitation wasn't something happening thousands of miles away in a foreign country. In fact, it was happening right here, in our community, to the very girls I was charged to protect.

The next few days were very difficult for me emotionally. I reflected on the many young girls who had crossed my path because they had been brought in on prostitution charges. Like many people within and outside the system, I had judged them. Countless times I had told girls, "There are better ways to make a living than selling your body. You should really have more respect for yourself."

What made it particularly difficult for me is that I have a Master's Degree in Social Work. I took pride in my ability to connect with young people, I felt I was a pretty good therapist, and I was working with some amazing young women who were overcoming significant childhood trauma. But I missed that this very trauma, the sexual abuse they experienced as little girls, was not a direct correlation to why they "chose" to sell their bodies, but was rather the very reason they were at such great risk for sexual exploitation.

How did I not make this connection? To be honest, I beat myself up for a long time, but realized that I can't change the past. From that day to this, my mantra has been and will be: When you know better you have to do better!

Over the past two years, we have worked hard to bring awareness to Los Angeles County, both outside and inside the system. One member of our Board of Supervisors,

Don Knabe, was integral in the launch of a public awareness campaign on our Metro system. The campaign highlights the growing problem of commercial sexual exploitation and asks citizens to be aware and to speak up if they see something. The flyers and billboards were placed on all buses, trains, station and bus stops – the places where girls are most vulnerable. The campaign expanded beyond the metro system and now, thanks to the private sector, we have over a hundred billboards throughout the County. We have created video messages and done countless media interviews because public awareness is critical. Until we as a society begin to shift our thinking from “teen prostitute” to “victim of sexual exploitation”, nothing will change for these young women.

Inside the system, training is paramount. Like me, so many others have made the same judgments about these young girls. We have trained over 2,500 people from various departments within the county, law enforcement, court system, faith-based community, community based organizations – anyone who may interface with young girls being exploited or who are vulnerable to exploitation.

This training on vulnerability is critical to the intersection of juvenile justice and child welfare. By the time girls see me, they have already been brought in for prostitution or a related offense. Since we know that most girls are first exploited between the ages of 11 and 14, and that we are arresting them later in their teens, they have endured years of violence and exploitation at the hands of their exploiters before we even identify them as victims.

We must, therefore, develop systems and protocols to identify these children earlier. Because so many exploited children have history in the child welfare system, that system provides an opportunity for prevention and early intervention efforts. However, child welfare has expressed challenges and barriers to serving CSEC, because these children have experienced childhoods wrought with extreme abuse and trauma. They require unique and specialized services that the child welfare system is not built, nor resourced, to effectively handle at this time.

In fact, our current system in California is not set up to address the issue. Youth who are commercially sexually exploited by someone other than a family member do not clearly fall under the child welfare codes, which largely address issues of familial abuse and neglect. As a result, reports to child protective services made on behalf of exploited youth may not elicit a response from child welfare. Consequently, until a youth is arrested, there may not be a formal response to known instances of severe exploitation and abuse even when the abuse has been reported by mandated reports or by a community member.

We must fix this. Studies show that virtually all exploited children have suffered extensive sexual, physical or emotional abuse and that the majority have had involvement with the child welfare system. Because of family dysfunction, many are in group homes or shelters, or they may have run away and are living on the streets. In fact, every 26 seconds, a child runs away in this country. She is running from something, not to something, making her particularly vulnerable.

A pimp or other exploiters prey on this vulnerability. One in three teens will be recruited by a pimp within 48 hours of leaving home and becoming homeless. He may pose as a boyfriend or parental figure, offering to provide her with food, clothes, shelter, security, even love. Later, after an emotional bond has been established, she is forced to engage in commercial sexual acts or face brutal physical violence.

Foster youth are extremely susceptible to exploitation due in part to their lack of attachment and their need to belong to someone. Unfortunately, when a young girl goes missing in the system, there is no one on TV pleading with the community to help find this lost child. She doesn't have a champion and her trafficker knows that. We must be that champion for her and the thousands of young girls who are victims of this horrific crime.

One young girl with whom I have worked grew up in the foster care system, was adopted, and then was sold by her adoptive mother to sustain her drug habit. She told me: "I remember the very first time my pimp told me that I would be going to a hotel to have sex with men. In the pit of my stomach I knew this didn't seem or feel right. I had a really bad feeling, but my need for love and to really belong to someone was more important. Because of my own sexual abuse as a child with different men, I already knew what having sex with men was about, so I went."

No one agency or system can adequately serve these victims alone. We need to ensure that mental health, probation, law enforcement, education, other health providers, and community based organizations are working together to bring resources to the table to serve these youth.

Right now we are faced with a major challenge: how do we identify, develop and implement a collaborative response to this growing problem – including clarifying jurisdictional issues, developing appropriate placements, training caregivers, social workers, and judicial officers, developing intervention services and after-care, employing a data collection mechanism, just to name a few.

It starts with a paradigm shift in how we see these girls. Your hearing today is evidence of this change happening. I would like to close in the words of a young victim/survivor we are working with now, who recently wrote about her experiences. She said:

"I would strive to change the law and how people view young people around the world that are being sold, bought and abused. This lifestyle is not a choice for many of us. Still, police officers look at us with disgust; it makes us feel ten times more pitiful. What we look like on the outside does not match what we feel on the inside.

Please remember there are hundreds, if not thousands of stories similar to mine. So let's help those in need, not judge and neglect us anymore. Show us that there is something better for us out there in this world. Give us the chance we never had. I will appreciate this more than you will ever know.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ORRIN G. HATCH, RANKING MEMBER  
U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE HEARING OF JUNE 11, 2013  
SEX TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION IN AMERICA:  
CHILD WELFARE'S ROLE IN PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, today issued the following opening statement at a committee hearing examining effective ways to identify, prevent, and intervene in cases involving sex trafficking and the exploitation of children and youth in America:

*Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this important hearing on domestic sex trafficking of children and youth. This disturbing issue is very relevant to child welfare programs under the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee.*

*Domestic sex trafficking, primarily of young girls, has recently received widespread public attention. However, much remains unclear about the instances, causes, and potential solutions regarding this growing problem.*

*For example, there is a shortage of reliable statistical data on how many American girls are sexually trafficked. Some estimates put the number of girls at risk for sexual exploitation at nearly 300,000.*

*If it's true that hundreds of thousands of girls may be at risk, it is particularly troubling that only a few hundred have been identified and recovered.*

*Some of these at-risk children are officially known to child welfare system as "thrown away" children. These are children whose parents have either kicked them out of the home or abandoned them to the state. When these children are trafficked and come to the attention of child welfare agencies, the agencies often do not perform proper screening because the child is not in the custody of their parents.*

*This is an appalling situation.*

*Mr. Chairman, I think we can all agree that no child should ever be thrown away.*

*Individuals on the front lines in the fight against trafficking report that instances of domestic sex trafficking are on the rise.*

*They tell us that former drug dealers have moved on to sex trafficking.*

*They also tell us that technological advances have made this type of trafficking even easier. Smart phones and other devices provide distance and increased levels of anonymity. And, certain websites that post classified ads soliciting sexual partners also help facilitate trafficking.*

*Reports indicate that girls in foster care are at an increased risk of being trafficked. Indeed, girls in foster care are especially vulnerable to the advances of traffickers. This is because a girl in foster care is more likely to have experienced neglect or abuse, which increases her risk.*

*Traffickers will initially present themselves to these girls as a boyfriend who slowly provides indoctrination. Once trafficking commences, the girl may run away from her foster or group home. In many states, when a youth in foster care runs away, no one looks for them.*

*Too often, regardless of whether or not she was connected to child welfare, if a girl is arrested for prostitution she will not be offered services or treatment. The majority of trafficked girls are thought to be between the ages of 12 and 14. Yet, even though the law stipulates that these girls are too young to give consent, they are often treated as perpetrators of a crime rather than victims of one.*

*Mr. Chairman, it is simply unacceptable that state child welfare systems are failing to serve these girls. I recognize that these may be difficult cases and that the trauma these children have endured often results in significant challenges. But we need to do a much better job in addressing their complex needs.*

*Congress needs to send clear, unambiguous signals to state child welfare agencies that they cannot abdicate their responsibilities to these girls.*

*This hearing should put child welfare agencies on notice that they must begin to work with Congress and with stakeholders in the field to properly identify and provide appropriate prevention and intervention services to victims of domestic sex trafficking and exploitation.*

*There are promising practices at the state level and there are agencies that are on the right track in identifying, preventing, and intervening in these cases. This hearing will highlight some of these practices and, hopefully, provide us with suggestions for improvements at the federal level.*

*I know that the Chairman shares my view that the child welfare system in the United States is in desperate need of reform.*

*For one thing, the financing structure of child welfare is misaligned. The majority of federal dollars are directed at the least desirable outcome: removing children from their homes and placing them with strangers.*

*I believe that the qualitative and systemic flaws in our current foster care system are among the factors that make girls in the foster care system so vulnerable to traffickers.*

*Again, Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this critical hearing.*

*I'd like to thank the witnesses in advance for your work and for your willingness to engage this committee on such a difficult subject. I look forward to your testimonies.*

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**Testimony of  
Commissioner Joette Katz  
State of Connecticut  
Department of Children and Families  
U.S. Senate Finance Committee  
June 11, 2013**



Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Hatch, and distinguished Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Joette Katz and I am the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). I would like to share with the Committee some of the efforts that the State of Connecticut has undertaken to address the issue of domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) and its impact on our children. First, it is important to provide an important backdrop.

Although much attention has been paid to these human rights violations in other countries, it is perhaps less widely known that child trafficking is occurring in the United States at an alarming rate. The United States Department of Justice estimates that 200,000 American children are potentially trafficked each year into the sex trade. The United States Department of State "*Trafficking in Persons Report 2010*" found that the majority of domestic victims enslaved in the sex industry are runaway and homeless youth. Nationally, 450,000 children run away from home each year. One of every three teens on the street will be lured toward prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home. This means at least 150,000 children are lured into prostitution each year. The average age of children victimized by pornography and prostitution in the United States is 12 years old.<sup>1</sup> Data shows that children who are involved with child welfare services, specifically, in the foster care system, are at a much higher risk of being trafficked into the sex trade.

The DCF is one of the nation's few agencies to offer child protection, behavioral health, juvenile justice and prevention services under the umbrella of a single Department. Accordingly, whether children are abused, neglected, involved in the juvenile justice system, or experience

<sup>1</sup> *National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children/NISMART-2.*

emotional, mental health or substance abuse issues, the Department can respond to these children in a way that draws upon community and state resources to help.

Over the past few years, we have seen a dramatic increase in the trafficking of minors in Connecticut. Human Trafficking is the third most profitable criminal industry in the world, generating an estimated \$32 billion per year.<sup>2</sup> The reaction of moral outrage that is prompted in the face of such child victimization has fueled considerable work here at the Department to galvanize a system wide collaborative effort necessary to identify and combat it.

Since 2008, when collaborative efforts in Connecticut significantly increased -- both internally at the Department and externally with the community -- there have been approximately 130 children who have been identified and confirmed as victims of DMST. Of those victims identified, **ninety-eight percent** have been involved with child welfare services in some manner, and many of these children have been victimized while legally in the care and custody of the Department.

To address the problem, over the past two years, the Department has been collaborating with local, state and federal law enforcement to better coordinate our response, particularly as it relates to the children in our child welfare system. We have found that the most significant barriers have been the identification of minor victims, development of appropriate responses and enforcement of the laws leading to the arrest and prosecution of persons responsible for these crimes.

#### **Identification and Response**

Identification of minor victims could not be accomplished without a statewide training initiative that incorporated the definition of the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and the evolving state legislation that has been modeled by other jurisdictions throughout the country. Most importantly, identification and response requires raising the awareness of the children and youth themselves who are being victimized by trafficking. The ultimate goal of the

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<sup>2</sup> ILO, *A global alliance against forced labor: 2005*.

trainings is to change the lens through which we viewed these most vulnerable youth from "prostitute" to "victim," or "survivor," as the girls would describe themselves.

The statewide training initiative has rolled out in various stages over the last several years. To date, the DCF Training Academy has provided two full days of training to hundreds of Department employees on the issues of DMST with thirty trainers from the Department who are available to conduct an abbreviated version. Training sessions have occurred across the state for parole and probation officers, private providers, police, emergency medical services, hospitals and emergency departments, schools, and various other community entities, among others. In addition, the Department offers a two-hour certified training on DMST to police officers from around the state through Connecticut's Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST). To date, hundreds of officers have been trained.

The Department's CARELINE, our twenty-four hour intake and information center, was at the forefront of this initiative ensuring that any potential case involving a minor be reviewed despite the lack of legal mandate. The Department protocol has evolved over the years and now our CARELINE accepts *all* cases of DMST regardless of whether the alleged perpetrator is the "entrusted" caregiver.

#### **State Legislative Activity**

The Department also continues to advocate for more robust legislation to combat DMST. In recent years, the Connecticut General Assembly has passed several acts<sup>3</sup> regarding DMST, including legislation that ensures law enforcement refer minor victims to the Department rather than arrest any exploited youth for prostitution. In response to this act, the DCF CARELINE implemented a designated call-in number for law enforcement to improve the Department's response times to police officers as well as any potential victims in need of

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<sup>3</sup> Connecticut General Assembly, Public Act 10-112, An Act Concerning the Forfeiture of Money and Property Related to Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking, the Possession of Child Pornography and the Siting of Residential Sexual Offender Treatment Facilities; Public Act 11-180, An Act Concerning Notification by the Department of Children and Families When a Youth is Arrested for Prostitution and Out-of-State Placements of Children and Youth; and Public Act 12-141, An Act Concerning Commercial Sexual Exploitation of a Minor.



services. This past weekend, our state legislature approved a bill<sup>4</sup> that provides a comprehensive response to address the issue of sexual exploitation and human trafficking by enhancing criminal penalties for the purchase and trafficking of minors, protecting child victims and adopting a criminal justice framework for investigation and prosecution.

#### **Interagency Collaboration**

To further assist with the development of a comprehensive and systemic response, an interagency team was established and is known now as the Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team (HART). The HART team, lead by the Department, is a multidisciplinary collaboration including staff from the Department, private providers and the Office of the Victim Advocate. All cases that are called into the CARELINE are reviewed and monitored by a member of the HART team to ensure an appropriate response that includes the provision of services to victims whose cases have not been substantiated. To guarantee that all cases are prosecuted to the fullest extent permitted by federal and state law, the Department collaborates with the FBI and Homeland Security on a regular basis.

Through HART, the Department's response protocol, designed by a DCF psychiatrist, includes new practice guidelines that provide a detailed framework to respond to potential victims. Additionally, the Department's medical team, in collaboration with the private provider network, developed a nursing assessment tool to help identify and treat youth.

Although the Department has not received additional funds, providers across the state who work with minor girls have been trained on the issues of DMST, ensuring competencies at every service level. A "My Life My Choice" curriculum<sup>5</sup> has been offered at various congregate care programs throughout the state and is now being implemented in community based programs. These strategies not only help to prevent youth from being trafficked, but also aid the youth in their self identification.

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<sup>4</sup> Connecticut General Assembly, H.B. No. 5666, *An Act Concerning Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons.*

<sup>5</sup> Training curriculum created by the Justice Resource Institute (JRI) to "develop and strengthen efforts to halt the disturbing wave of exploitation and trafficking in the United States."

**Conclusion**

While much of our focus in Connecticut has been on the girls, we are equally concerned about the issue of boys and DMST. This issue currently is under review by the Department in collaboration with our private provider network with a primary focus on identification and response. In addition, the Department is finalizing the design of a curriculum for adolescent boys in an effort to deter boys and young men from encouraging and/or engaging in the acts of DMST.

We are proud that we have made considerable progress in increasing awareness of this horrific issue, but we fully understand that we still have work to do in Connecticut to protect our vulnerable children. To help illustrate the magnitude of this problem, attached to my testimony is a brief synopsis of two of our cases. Both children were involved with the child welfare system.

Once again, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak today. I'll be happy to answer any questions that Committee members may have.

### Laura's Story

#### Pre-existing Risk Factors:

- DCF Probate involvement 2003 - Guardianship awarded to maternal great aunt due to mother's substance abuse in 2003; but bio mom always remains in contact with Laura and her older sister, Amy.
- In 2007 allegations that mother used the children to deliver "weed (marijuana) bags" and collect money from buyers outside of her home.
- Biological Mother is a convicted felon on drug charges and placed at York Correctional Facility for a period of time sometime in 2008.
- No paternal contact or involvement from age four to age 15 (2011) when Laura visited Puerto Rico and was reintroduced to her biological father.
- DCF involvement from 2006 to 2008 for allegations of physical abuse (hitting with belts, extension cords) physical and emotional neglect by maternal aunt/guardian against Laura and her older sister, Amy.
- 2008 Laura begins exhibiting self-injurious (cutting) behavior and "anger" problems.
- April 2011 Laura begins dating her older sister Ashley's 19 year-old ex-boyfriend, David. David is a known gang member.
- July 2011, Laura begins a series of AWOLs lasting from two days to three weeks.

#### Initiation into CSE (Events occurred over the course of 2 to 3 years.)

- Sometime before April 2011, sister, Amy begins dating David, a 19 year-old gang member. Shortly after they begin dating, David attempts to coerce Amy into having sex with other boys/men. Amy ends the relationship but tells no one about David's attempts to engage her in sex with others.
- April 2011, Laura begins dating David.
- April 2011 - Pictures are posted on Facebook of Laura engaged in sexual activity with an unidentified young man.
- Bio mom discovers Facebook picture through anonymous tip from sister, Amy. Upon discovery of Facebook pictures, bio mom physically assaults Laura in the presence of her maternal aunt/legal guardian, who does not intervene to protect Laura from being physically disciplined by her biological mother.
- July 2012 -- Laura goes AWOL from the home for the weekend. This is the first AWOL ever.
- August 2012 - Laura AWOLS from the home and is missing for approximately three weeks. She was reported to "look awful as if on drugs" upon return home.
- September 8, 2012 -- Laura goes AWOL again.
- September 11, 2012 -- DCF CARELINE receives reports of suspected sex trafficking and theft. Specifically, Laura returned to the family home from her AWOL on September 8, 2012 and stole a family member's ATM card and ID telling her sister, Amy that she needed the ATM card to access money to give to a man to whom she owed \$300 dollars. Laura left the home again immediately after stealing the ATM card and ID. Subsequently and while on continued AWOL, Laura called family members from a blocked number and reported that she was locked in a room somewhere but didn't

know where she was. She told family members that she was with a man who was selling her to have sex for money and giving her marijuana laced with cocaine, and that the man had tattooed a heart next to her left eye. Laura told family members that there were at least two or three other girls with similar tattoos. Later, while still on AWOL Laura posted to her Facebook account that she was pregnant. Her Facebook account was immediately deactivated after that posting.

- September 24, 2012 -- Laura was found injured after a serious car accident while en route to New York City with her boyfriend David's adult sister. Laura had been ejected from the car during a high speed accident and sustained a traumatic brain injury and severe facial injuries. She was admitted to the intensive care unit of a local hospital.

#### Outcomes

- Police investigation revealed Laura's captor and trafficker to be David, her gang-member "boyfriend." Police investigation also revealed that Laura was drugged and coerced to participate in armed robberies during her three week/AWOL and captivity and that at the time of the car accident she was most likely being transported to New York City to be trafficked there.
- Following the car accident, Laura was treated and released to her aunt/legal guardian. She continued to AWOL from the home and was placed in detention until discharged to Stepping Stone Residential Treatment where she participated in the *My Life My Choice* program (an education and prevention program for girls at risk of CSE) and received a DCF IE evaluation.
- Laura was discharged from Stepping Stone with a DCF IE recommendation to return home with MDFT, mentoring and individual trauma focused therapy. Since returning home, Laura has had one AWOL and one subsequent short-term admission to Stepping Stone, but has since returned home and is actively engaged in treatment and school.

Jay's StoryPre-existing Risk Factors:

- Involved with DCF since 1999 for allegations of inadequate supervision, emotional neglect, physical neglect (Conditions injurious to a child) and sexual abuse/exploitation.
- Severe domestic violence (choking, tire slashing) between mother and father.
- Alcohol and drug abuse by mother and father.
- Attempted suicide by father after "misunderstanding" between father and mother (circa May 2002);
- Maternal grandparents addicted to crack cocaine.
- Maternal grandfather arrested for vaginal and oral sexual assault of Jay's two younger sisters (2005).
- Corporal punishment/physical abuse when Jay and brother try to intervene between parents during incidents of DV.
- Jay smoked marijuana since age 8 when introduced to it by his older (12 y/o brother).

Initiation into CSE (Events occurred over the course of 2 to 3 years.)

- Jay (12 y/o) and older brother (16 y/o) are introduced to male owner of landscaping business by father for yard work.
- After one week Jay's older brother is fired and Jay is kept because Jay "works harder", according to business owner.
- Jay is treated to dinner at local restaurants and pubs with business owner as a reward for a job well done.
- Business owner "treats" Jay to alcohol during dinner.
- Business owner allows Jay free access to alcohol while on the job.
- Business owner begins inviting Jay and Jay's friends to his home after work.
- Business owner begins using prescription medication, marijuana and alcohol with Jay and Jay's friend's after work and in the business owner's home.
- Business owner begins viewing pornographic videos of male-to-male sex while he and Jay and Jay's friends smoke marijuana and drink alcohol.
- Business owner offers Jay (and Jay's friends) \$600 to pose naked while he (the business owner) masturbates.
- Jay's sister reports observing Jay and one of the men masturbating while watching porn.
- During investigation, Jay acknowledges that the business owner provided him with marijuana, alcohol, and pornographic videos, and that the business owner offered to pay him to pose naked. However, Jay adamantly denied accepting money or engaging in sexual activity with the business owner, but reported that other boys did in fact receive money or drugs in exchange for sexual activities.



## COMMUNICATIONS

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Statement on behalf of [the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking]  
For the Hearing before the Committee on Finance  
The United States Senate  
"Child Welfare and Sex Trafficking"  
June 11, 2013

The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) is a diverse alliance of U.S.-based human rights organizations, acting with a shared agenda to end modern-day slavery and human trafficking domestically and globally. The current member organizations address many different aspects of human trafficking, including both labor trafficking and sex trafficking. ATEST member organizations include: Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST), Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), ECPAT-USA, Free the Slaves, International Justice Mission, Not For Sale, Polaris Project, Safe Horizon, Solidarity Center, Verité, Vital Voices Global Partnership, World Vision, and one individual member, Julia Ormond, former U.N. Goodwill Ambassador and president and founder of the Alliance to Stop Slavery and End Trafficking (ASSET).

We, the members of ATEST, are writing to express the importance of discussing all forms of human trafficking, including both sex and labor trafficking, when addressing the intersection between the crime of human trafficking and the child welfare system. In particular, we are writing to you to urge the inclusion of language in the Senate Child Sex Trafficking and Data Response Act of 2013 (CSTDR) that would ensure that data collected pursuant to this bill includes information about victims of labor trafficking. The current Senate version only requires that data be collected about child victims of sex trafficking. While collecting this information is crucial to combating human trafficking, the data collection requirements in the current version of the bill are insufficient to assessing the scope of the problem as well as being used to provide effective recommendations on solutions to combat human trafficking.

The role of child welfare in prevention and intervention of human trafficking extends beyond the protection of only sex trafficked children. Child welfare agencies are in a position to prevent all forms of human trafficking and protect both sex and labor trafficked children. Indeed, victims of sexual exploitation and forced labor are included in the federal definition of a victim of human trafficking. Under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, Section 103(8) defines a "severe forms of trafficking in persons" as an individual subjected to both sexual exploitation and "involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery."

Children trafficked for forced labor are often victims of related or concurrent crimes or may appear to be a victim of a crime other than trafficking. For example, child employment violations, domestic violence, child sexual abuse, child pornography, and child abuse or neglect may all occur simultaneously with child labor trafficking.

Although data on the issue of both sex and labor trafficking in the United States is currently incomplete, what we do know is that human trafficking, in all its forms, spans

across all fifty states and diverse industries, such as agriculture, restaurant work, hair and nail salons, peddling rings, domestic work, commercial sex, forced begging, and drug smuggling or cultivation.

The National Human Trafficking Resources Center (NHTRC) has identified over 400 potential cases of child labor trafficking in the United States including: sales crews/peddling rings (196 cases); domestic work (25 cases); restaurant work (24 cases); small business (17 cases) and agriculture (7 cases). In addition, the NHTRC has identified potential labor trafficking cases across several industries, for instance 19 involving small business and 15 across other labor sectors.

Some specific case examples of labor trafficked children identified in the United States include:

- **Mary**, a young Mexican girl, was forced to peddle tamales on the street and sexually assaulted in her family's home. While she was peddling on the street, a woman noticed bruises on her body and called the police. Police dropped Mary off at the local homeless shelter where she waited for help for over two months before being identified as a child trafficking victim by a staff member.
- **Jessica** was 17 when she was recruited to sell magazines in the southern United States. She was forcibly transported and made to work in various locations in the United States and finally escaped when she was 18. She went to a police department for help. The police department considered her homeless and did not identify this as a labor trafficking case.
- **Liz and Marty**, two American youth were homeless after their families kicked them out of their homes and answered a website ad for au pair services. Once they were flown to the host family's home, they were forced to work every day and sexually assaulted by the father of the household, who used drugs to sedate them. This is example of case that started as a labor trafficking case and resulted in sexual assault as well.
- **Marco**, 16, was forced to smuggle drugs into the United States. He was violently beaten and watched a friend be killed in front of him. Marco was arrested for selling drugs and sentenced to time in juvenile hall instead being identified a victim of human trafficking.

These examples demonstrate that child victims of labor trafficking are clearly victims of abuse and neglect in the same way that sex trafficked children are victims of abuse and neglect. All of these children are in need of services and protections. Sex and labor trafficked children need immediate access to shelter, medical care, and therapy, not necessarily through the juvenile delinquency system, but rather via a system designed to protect abused children. Finally, all trafficked children have safety concerns and require criminal justice advocacy, especially given that their traffickers often times are connected to organized criminal networks and gangs.



In addition, because of the nature of this crime, many child labor trafficking victims will not self-identify as victims and feel bonded to their trafficker/abuser. This situation occurs frequently in both the labor and sex trafficking context. Similarly, both labor and sex trafficked children are often still arrested for the crimes their traffickers force them to commit. This dynamic suggests that increasing the capacity of child welfare agencies to identify victims could increase the number of individuals who receive appropriate assistance.

Although most studies looking at the issue of child trafficking have focused on only child sex trafficking, a recently released study from May 2013 by Covenant House, entitled *Homelessness, Survival Sex and Human Trafficking: As Experienced by the Youth of Covenant House New York*, identified both sex and labor trafficked youth. This study interviewed 174 youth receiving services from Covenant House and found that 12% of these youth had experienced sex trafficking and 3% had experienced labor trafficking unknown to Covenant House prior to the study. Notably, the study shows that identification of sex and labor trafficking cases is easily done through the same questionnaire and training. It concluded, *"the dynamics of labor trafficking appeared very similar to those of sex trafficking, with traffickers exploiting vulnerable people's desperation and isolation."*<sup>1</sup> The study also found that labor trafficked children, analogous to sex trafficked children, are recruited by family members or close family friends, that this recruitment occurs at an early age (e.g., two of the children identified were recruited at the age of 11 and 14), and that trafficking can be to further illegal activities such as drug sales.

Our system has failed to appropriately identify and serve all child trafficking victims. As we explore the role of child welfare systems' responses to trafficking, it must include both sex and labor trafficking in order to protect all children from human trafficking, abuse and neglect.

Listed below are key recommendations from ATEST on best practices for child welfare agencies when developing training, protocols, and services for all trafficked youth.

### **Human Trafficking Guidelines for Child Protection Agencies**

#### **I. Training:**

1. All human trafficking trainings for child protection agencies should cover sex and labor trafficking of foreign national and U.S. citizen children in line with the federal definition of human trafficking.
2. Child protection agencies should involve specialized service providers and survivors in both the development and the delivery of trainings. Survivors should receive compensation and support for such work. Providers can include runaway homeless

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<sup>1</sup> Covenant House, *Homelessness, Survival Sex and Human Trafficking: As Experienced by the Youth of Covenant House New York*, 13 (May 2013).

youth services, LGBT youth organizations, anti-trafficking and victim services agencies in the development and implementation of the trainings.

3. All staff should be required to attend an introductory human trafficking training that is no less than two hours in length and should attend a continuing education training no less than once a year. These trainings must cover both labor and sex trafficking of girls, boys, and transgender youth.

4. Advanced human trafficking training should be available, and ideally required, for those likely to interface with potential trafficked youth. Staff with a special interest in this population should be targeted for this advanced training. If possible, specialist caseworkers should be identified and receive advance training.

5. A formal protocol for training should be implemented in order to ensure that human trafficking 101 and advanced trainings are mandatory for target staff and available to staff on a regular basis. Child protection agencies should also reach out to emergency response partners, including police and emergency medical staff, to partner on basic trainings where possible.

6. Advanced training should target staff with specific roles within child protection agencies such as supervisors, case managers, and residential and emergency workers.

7. All mandated reported trainings should be updated to include human trafficking of minors.

8. Human trafficking 101 training should at a minimum include:

- Types of human trafficking, including profiles and methods.
- Identification of trafficked youth, which should include indicators and sample questions to ask based on role.
- Dynamics of exploited and trafficked youth, which should include profiles, trauma, and developmental impact.
- Importance of early assessment of therapeutic needs of youth.

9. Advanced training topics could include the following:

- Building trust and a rapport with trafficked youth.
- Methods of interviewing trafficked youth.
- Applying client-centered practice to trafficked youth.
- Addressing safety issues for trafficked youth.
- Engaging parental or support care systems for trafficked youth.
- Exploring benefits available to trafficked youth, such as Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding, public benefits for foreign nationals, and forms of immigration relief.
- Managing criminal victim witness issues for trafficked youth.

- Understanding the impact of childhood exposure to abuse, neglect, and violence as risk factors for recruitment into domestic minor sex trafficking.
- Understanding the interplay between forms of legal redress, such as vacating prior convictions, bringing a private right of action, appearing as a victim-witness, and engaging in immigration proceedings.
- Defining the intersection of intimate partner violence, domestic violence, and dating violence in both labor and sex trafficking of minors.
- Identifying boys, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth, and other marginalized youth populations at risk for trafficking.
- Working with developmental delays and trafficking vulnerability.
- Identifying the needs of undocumented youth, e.g., unaccompanied minors and those eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS).
- Working with migrant farm-worker youth and trafficking vulnerabilities
- Addressing trafficking within child protection settings, group homes, foster homes, and emergency shelters as targets for trafficking (This section should also be included in the basic training when the audience is applicable.).

10. Target audiences for advanced training should include:

*Child Protection Staff*

- Child protection investigators.
- Child protection staff responsible for intakes.
- Staff in residential placement facilities.
- Specialist caseworkers focused on human trafficking.
- State Central Registry and hotline workers.
- All mandated-reporter training materials.
- Emergency overnight shelter service staff including security officers.
- Group home staff.
- Juvenile justice staff within the child protection system.

*Contracted Partners and other stakeholders*

- Contracted medical and mental health providers.
- Court-mandated, and alternatives to, incarceration, and family court program partners.
- Mental health professional staff serving identified trafficked youth.
- Legal advocates, including guardians ad litem, representing identified trafficked youth.

*Families*

- Foster families caring for trafficked youth, including kin providing care.
- Parents or guardians of identified trafficked youth.

**II. Prevention:**

1. Training programs should explore early identification of youth at risk of trafficking for all front-line staff.
2. Specialized programming or therapy for youth at risk for trafficking should be developed.
3. Links to external programs for at-risk youth should be identified and cultivated. Additionally, organizations and speakers who can educate staff about youth at-risk to trafficking should be utilized as resources.
4. A formal protocol for identifying at-risk youth should be implemented.
5. Child protection agencies should consider partnering with schools to do outreach and training as this is a critical location for prevention efforts.

**III. Identification:**

1. Child protection agencies should implement a formal protocol for identifying trafficked youth.
2. Understanding that there are no magic-button intake questions, child protection intakes should be updated to include several key questions about human trafficking. If the child answers "yes" to any of these, then they should be referred to a human trafficking case management specialist for a more comprehensive screening. However, the term "human trafficking" should not be used with youth, as this is often a misunderstood or unclear term. Instead, screening questions should utilize youth-friendly terminology and focus on survival activities to identify potentially trafficked youth.
3. Intake questions may include, but are not limited to:
  - Do you have access to your identification documents, or is someone else holding them?
  - Have you worked for anyone without being paid or without being paid what you were promised?
  - Have you not been able to attend school because you had to work?
  - Have you ever done something sexual for money or food or a place to stay?
  - Have you been involved sexually with people on the Internet like sending photos or videos to someone?
  - Has an older person outside of your family ever asked you to leave home with them?
  - Have you ever been arrested or committed a crime that you felt someone else forced you to do?
  - Have you spent one or more nights homeless in the last year?

- Have you ever done something like holding or selling drugs or other things that may have gotten you in trouble, for someone else?

#### **IV. Serving and Engaging Potential Victims:**

Understanding that youth are often wary of child protection staff, trainings should be provided to help key front-line staff engage with youth who may be victims of trafficking. Outreach workers, truancy officers, age-out planners, and other key stakeholders should receive training to help them engage vulnerable youth, including the traveler homeless youth communities, youth with mental illness, and youth with developmental delays. Once a child has been identified as trafficked, the following guidelines can help child protection workers to effectively address the full range of survivors needs:

1. Child protection agencies should make every effort to designate specialist caseworkers to specifically focus on working with youth identified as trafficked or strongly suspected as trafficked. Knowing that it often takes time for youth to disclose they have been trafficked, workers should be given extended time on these cases.
2. Refer youth to therapists who have received advanced human trafficking training.
3. Share information about enrollment in VOCA or other state benefits including relevant deadlines.
4. Referral to an attorney with expertise in criminal victim witness advocacy for all trafficked youth and immigration expertise for foreign national victims.
5. Provide consistent safety screenings and assessments.
6. Finding safe housing for trafficked youth can be challenging. Trafficked children need options for various placement and housing, as preferences will be dependent on a variety of factors including: gender, sexual preference, and safety. Because this population often lacks stability, it is extremely important that children who leave placement should be able to return to the same placement if they choose to do so. Housing options should include:
  - Placement with family or former guardian(s) with specialized support for family reunification, when appropriate.
  - Placement in specialized foster care. Consider providing additional financial support to these foster families in the same way that additional support is often provided to foster families caring for children with special medical or mental health needs.
  - Preferential residential care facilities for trafficked children or for children who identify as LGBT. Out-of-state placements should also be an option for the child

(if preferred), while simultaneously preparing wrap around services for the child when they return.

- Secure placement should be considered as a last resort, and when used it should be modeled after the strict requirements in place for children designated as a harm to themselves or others.
- A specialized case manager with a reduced caseload should serve trafficked youth wherever possible.
- Note: It could take months or longer for youth to self-identify. Services should not be contingent on positive identification.

7. Engage mentors who were formerly in the life to work with youth seeking to exit the life.

**V. Data Collection:**

1. Implementation of a formal protocol for data collection and regular reporting should be completed and rolled out.

2. There should be standardized data collection on all trafficked youth, including:

- Separate categories for sex and labor, or both.
- Indication of whether labor trafficked youth also experienced sexual violence.
- Gender.
- Race/Ethnicity.
- Gender identity.
- Sex.
- Whether a third party exploited the trafficked youth.
- If the child was trafficked by a family member.
- Age at recruitment.
- Number of traffickers.

3. There should also be standardized data collection of all at-risk trafficked youth.

Our collective experience working throughout the United States has demonstrated the need to require child welfare agencies to identify and protect child victims of labor trafficking, as well as child victims of sex trafficking. Indeed, it is precisely because they have not been identified as victims of trafficking at all that child victims of labor trafficking can be held in such situations for lengthy periods of time without being identified or rescued.

In conclusion, we strongly encourage you to address the issue of all child trafficking and how the child welfare system can best address their unmet needs in any future discussion or hearing on this issue.



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**Testimony Submitted for the Record**

**Senate Finance Committee Hearing on  
 Sex Trafficking and Exploitation in America: Child Welfare's Role in Prevention and  
 Intervention**

**June 11, 2013**

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement for the Senate Finance Committee hearing record on *Sex Trafficking and Exploitation in America: Child Welfare's Role in Prevention and Intervention*.

CWDA represents the human service directors from each of California's 58 counties. CWDA's mission is to promote a human services system that encourages self-sufficiency of families and communities and protects vulnerable children and adults from abuse and neglect.

CWDA has identified the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) as a key programmatic and legislative priority. We've had several discussions on this topic with our members in recent months. The conversations have been eye-opening, heart-breaking, and emotional. We know the majority of child victims have suffered extensive abuse and trauma, many have been in some contact with the child welfare system, and that some victims are recruited directly from the very group homes they were placed in while in foster care.

We are also active members of California's Child Welfare Council whose CSEC Workgroup recently issued a groundbreaking report calling for a multi-system collaboration within California to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children. CWDA is actively engaged in the ongoing discussions of the Workgroup. (A link to that report is provided at the end of this statement).

CWDA also testified last month before the California Senate Human Services Committee and provided input on pending CSEC legislation. On the federal level, CWDA submitted comments to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on its Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the U.S.

The problem is particularly serious in our state. According to the FBI, three of the nation's 13 High Intensity Child Prostitution areas are located in California: the metropolitan areas of San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego. But the problem extends past those borders.

We are learning from county staff -- including those in Alameda, Los Angeles and San Bernardino -- about their experiences and how they have developed collaborative responses to serve CSEC victims. It is clear that those counties have leveraged other resources outside of

the child welfare system to serve this population--specifically probation, mental health, public health, education, law enforcement, the courts and community based providers that specialize in serving CSEC victims. These counties have also taken years to build up their resources and collaborative processes. And, while these youth are in some ways like other children they serve, they also present unique challenges that the county child welfare system is not built nor funded to handle effectively on its own. For example, CSEC victims often come with extreme abuse and trauma requiring specialized services. Victims may not initially accept services and often return to their pimp out of fear or intimidation, requiring an approach that includes both a safe environment for victims with intensive services to break that harmful bond.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a critically important problem requiring a comprehensive solution. The challenge is how do counties and their community partners identify, develop and implement the necessary elements of a comprehensive solution—including clarifying jurisdictional issues, developing appropriate placements, training caregivers, social workers and judicial officers, developing intervention services and after-care, just to name a few.

It is very clear to CWDA that commercially exploited children should be treated as victims and not be subject to further harm or trauma from systems that are ill-prepared to serve them. CWDA is eager to partner with community stakeholders to develop a comprehensive approach to the issue.

In the course of our discussions, there are several key elements to a comprehensive solution that have been identified by our members:

**Data:** California's county child welfare agencies are tasked with responding and investigating more than 481,000 reports of child abuse and/or neglect each year.. And, according to the California Department of Justice's 2012 report on Human Trafficking, over the past two years the state's nine regional human trafficking task forces identified 1,277 victims, with 72 percent of them born in the U.S. Of those who received services, 56 percent were victims of sex trafficking. (A link to that report is provided at the end of this statement).

We have also learned from county directors and community organizations that:

- 90% of CSEC victims have a previous history of child abuse and neglect
- Youth who experience sexual abuse are 28 times more likely to be exploited than their non-abused counterparts
- 50-85% have history with the child welfare system prior to exploitation
- A review of 72 cases in Los Angeles County's Succeeding Through Achievement and Resilience (STAR) Court serving CSEC victims found that 56 of them were involved with child welfare services
- In Oakland (Alameda County), two CSEC provider organizations serving 200 youth learned that 53% of those youth reported living in group homes

These data are limited. While one CSEC victim is too many, counties and our partners need to find a way to gather data to give all of us a better sense of the scope of the problem. They do not provide us with an accurate picture of the number of youth who are CSEC victims. In fact, we often do not know who they are. There are numerous challenges to identifying victims as



the California Child Welfare Council's report has highlighted. Foster caregivers and social workers need to be trained to identify youth who are victims or at risk of victimization and must have screening tools that identify and can link victims to critical services such as mental health.

**Specialized Services:** Once identified, victims need specialized services to meet their unique needs, and in many ways these services are unlike services county agencies now offer to the foster care population. Child welfare must protect the youth from their exploiter, gain their trust so they will accept our services, help them heal from trauma, and work to re-engage in school and other healthy, safe and positive youth activities. These efforts should include strategies that employ CSE survivors to provide outreach and support to help get CSE youth off the streets and re-engaged in child-serving agencies.

**Collaboration:** No one agency or system can appropriately serve these victims alone. We need to ensure that mental health, probation, law enforcement, education, substance abuse and other health providers are working together to each bring resources to the table to serve these youth. We also need the expertise of community-based service providers who understand the unique needs of these youth to engage and build trust. Drop-in centers staffed by caring and trained adults can help get youth off the streets by providing for immediate basic needs (i.e. food, shelter, basic necessities) and re-engage them with child welfare or other community-based providers who can help them. MISSSEY in Alameda County (Oakland) is an example of such a center.

**Trained Foster Caregivers are Critical:** Importantly, we need well-trained foster caregivers who can identify and support victims on a daily basis while in care. Locking victims in juvenile halls is not the solution. We need to support a continuum of placements that includes emergency crisis stabilization all the way through the transition to community-based after-care. A component in the continuum would be to link foster youth to caring adults serving as a permanent connection to the youth, regardless if that person is able or willing to adopt or become a legal guardian.

There are many more questions that California's counties and its community-based providers need to address and answer. They include, but are not limited to:

**Funding:** What federal, state and county funding may be leveraged and combined to deliver services, including Medicaid, IV-E Foster Care and EPSDT?

**Responsive County Agencies:** What is child welfare's role when the perpetrator is not a family member, and how do county child welfare agencies reconcile this with our primary role in addressing familial abuse and neglect?

**Aligning Community Providers and Needs:** How do we develop capacity in counties that don't have community-based providers with CSEC experience and what should we expect from counties that may see very few of these cases compared to counties that have greater numbers of victims?

**Prevention:** What strategies can we implement for prevention and early intervention, to reduce the need for costly interventions and prevent this horrific abuse from occurring?

**Coordinating with Federal Agencies:** How should county child welfare agencies and state agencies coordinate with the FBI and other federal agencies to address the needs of CSEC victims and to reduce the prevalence of CSEC?

In conclusion, there is a great sense of urgency to serve this population. And there is no silver bullet solution. Our county directors believe we need a careful, thoughtful, and comprehensive solution that best meets the needs of CSEC youth while addressing these critical unresolved issues. We are eager to work closely with the Senate Finance Committee as its members consider federal responses to protect and serve victims of this terrible crime.

Links to California reports on Human Trafficking:

**California Department of Justice**

***The State of Human Trafficking in California: 2012***

<http://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/pdfs/ht/human-trafficking-2012.pdf>

**California Child Welfare Council**

***Ending the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Call for Multi-System Collaboration in California: 2012***

<http://shum.senate.ca.gov/sites/shum.senate.ca.gov/files/5-14-13CWC%20report.pdf>



**United States Senate  
Committee on Finance  
Full Committee Hearing**

**"Sex Trafficking and Exploitation in America:  
Child Welfare's Role in Prevention and Intervention"**

**Tuesday, June 11, 2013, 10:00 AM  
215 Dirksen Senate Office Building**

**Statement for the Record of  
Teresa Huizar, Executive Director  
National Children's Alliance  
516 C Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002**

Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Hatch and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a statement for the record for your recent Full Committee hearing, "Sex Trafficking and Exploitation in America: Child Welfare's Role in Prevention and Intervention."

National Children's Alliance (NCA) is the national association and accrediting body for, as well as a provider of training and technical assistance to, more than 800 Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) throughout the United States. Children's Advocacy Centers are community-based public-private partnerships that coordinate child abuse investigations and intervention services through a multidisciplinary team comprised of law enforcement, prosecutors, child protective services, victim advocacy agencies, medical and mental health professionals and Children's Advocacy Center staff. These centers provide forensic interviews, medical evaluations, trauma-focused mental healthcare, and victim advocacy and support throughout the life of a civil or criminal case, and often beyond it. NCA empowers local communities to respond to child abuse efficiently and effectively by: providing grants for the start-up and development of Children's Advocacy Centers; providing access to technical assistance and training to improve the ability of these multidisciplinary professionals to respond to these complex cases; and by monitoring performance standards and outcomes to ensure that children receive the highest standard of care.

Children's Advocacy Centers serve children ages 0-18 years of age. Currently, two-thirds of all US counties have access to the services of a Children's Advocacy Center. Last year, Children's Advocacy Centers served more than 286,000 child victims of abuse through the U.S.-- 2/3 of whom were victims of sexual abuse. In addition, accredited CACs provided child abuse prevention education to more than 500,000 individuals, and training and technical assistance to more than 48,000 child abuse professionals.

As you and your colleagues on the U.S. Senate Finance Committee draft legislation focusing on the federal government's role in combating child sex trafficking, I encourage you to examine the time-tested Children's Advocacy Center/Multidisciplinary Team model as an effective, evidence-based approach to combating child sex trafficking and minimizing re-victimization. Children's Advocacy Centers are uniquely positioned to act as an important resource in your work going forward given their:

- broad accessibility in the US;
- their long history of expertise in all forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation;
- existing close relationships with law enforcement, prosecutors, CPS, victims advocates, and medical and mental healthcare providers;
- and, the body of research demonstrating that this proven intervention model works.

#### **Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sex Trafficking**

Children of every gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and family structure are at risk for sexual abuse and exploitation. Child sexual abuse and exploitation is a crime perpetuated by

silence and secrecy. Isolation, whether within a family or by community, adds significant risk for sexual abuse. Children who live in rural areas, for example, are almost 2 times more likely to be identified as victims of child sexual abuse.<sup>1</sup>

Understanding the scope of the problem also requires understanding that child sexual abuse exists on a continuum of deviant and harmful behavior by the perpetrator that begins on one end with secretive and furtive victimization, slides into amateur or professional photo-documentation of that abuse primarily for the sexual gratification of the offender, may move toward commercialization or public sharing of those images with other offenders, and on the far end of that continuum may include prostituting or trafficking the child. Sadly, many children who are abused at home later become youth who are trafficked on the streets by others. And, of course, a child/youth may experience one, all, or some combination of these forms of child sexual abuse.

**Children’s Advocacy Centers increased guidance, collaboration, and civic engagement on child sex trafficking:**

Children’s Advocacy Centers play a key role in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases, as well as the healing of victims. Children’s Advocacy Centers are also uniquely equipped to be the first responders for victims of child sex trafficking. Recent research indicates that “one of the major ways that officers [reported] compromising previous potential human trafficking investigations was through poor interviewing of victims.”<sup>2</sup> In that same report, researchers noted that “human trafficking victims who suffer from trauma may require multiple interviews before they can accurately discuss the victimization they experience.”<sup>3</sup> For more than 25 years, Children’s Advocacy Centers have proven their forensic interviewing techniques, and trauma-focused intervention services, help victims through the process.

Children’s Advocacy Centers have trained forensic interviewers available who understand how to question children and teens in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way. Many CACs, including the Suffolk County, MA CAC who testified at this hearing, are already providing such services to commercially sexually exploited youth. And, those that are not could do so with a small federal investment in training to serve this specific population. National Children’s Alliance has not only encouraged CACs to provide services to commercially sexually exploited youth, but we have also funded grants in this area to local Children’s Advocacy Centers for the past few years. However, the federal dollars available for these grants is woefully short of the need. In addition to Suffolk County CAC, innovations like the Miami, FL CAC, Kristi’s House, which opened the first shelter for sexually trafficked youth at the CAC will be unlikely to be replicated unless additional federal dollars are available for this purpose. Moreover, encouraging the use of existing proven and evidence-supported networks through funding expansion of their services is a far more cost-

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<sup>1</sup> Sedlack, et al 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Farrell A., McDevitt J., Pfeffer R., Fahy S., Owens C., Dank M., Adams W. (2012). Identifying Challenges to Improve the Investigation and Prosecution of State and Local Human Trafficking Cases. Northeastern University’s Institute on Race and Justice and the Urban Institute’s Justice Policy Center, pp 96-97.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

effective approach than creating new and untested networks of services in these tight budget times.

Furthermore, to encourage the use of CACs by federal law enforcement agencies, NCA has been working with the FBI to overlay the service coverage of Children's Advocacy Centers with locations of Innocence Lost Task Forces so that standard operating procedures may be developed for their ongoing use. While individual CACs have been, and continue to be, used by FBI agents as they work these difficult cases, our goal is to ensure that each Task Force has ready access and an SOP with at least one NCA accredited CAC to ensure smooth operations and the best possible care for these children/youth. Indeed, at the recent US Department of Justice's 2013 Missing Children's Day, a Children's Advocacy Center was recognized for their outstanding work in interviewing 40 victims in such a case. All CACs can and should be used in this way as a regular part of the response repertoire. I would encourage you to consider including the development of MOUs between the FBI and NCA, on behalf of CACs, in any draft legislative proposal to formalize access to this valuable resource for federal law enforcement and network of care for vulnerable youth.

**Children's Advocacy Centers increase understanding of human trafficking among government agencies and law enforcement through targeted training and technical assistance:**

Beyond intervention services for victims and their families, Children's Advocacy Centers also provide training to their multidisciplinary team members. Last year, National Children's Alliance, and their Children's Advocacy Center members and partners, provided training to more than 46,600 child abuse professionals. Investigating, prosecuting, and treating child abuse and child sex trafficking is complex and specialized work that requires highly trained professionals and access to continuing education for those professionals. Because 98% of child abuse investigations and prosecutions occur at the state/local level, training resources using federal funds should likewise be driven down to this level, and CACs have a proven track record of effectively and efficiently using public funds for these purposes. And, for those cases that will be prosecuted federally, NCA and our member CACs, in partnership with other important responders such as NCMEC and ICAC Teams, are valuable training and technical assistance resources. A modest investment in expanding existing online training opportunities to include a specialized training track for CSEC and child sex trafficking topics would ensure that nearly 50,000 prosecutors, law enforcement officers, child protective service workers, medical professionals, mental health counselors, and victim advocates had the information that they need to effectively respond in these cases. Including these training resources and the use of the CAC network to spread them in your plan moving forward would be an effective training delivery method for many professionals at very low cost.

**Children's Advocacy Centers increase victim identification and expand the availability of services for enforcement:**

The majority of Children's Advocacy Centers were founded after the passage of the Victims of Child Abuse Act in 1990; which was an important part of Congress' efforts to improve the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse. Monies appropriated by Congress, each year since 1992, have improved the response within existing Centers, while aiding the

development of new Children's Advocacy Centers in areas previously underserved. This much appreciated modest federal investment has been used to leverage state funding, private foundations, and local community donors.

The federal investment has yielded significant returns. The model of comprehensive care for child abuse victims has significant evidence of its efficacy. Independent research has found that child abuse cases coordinated through a Children's Advocacy Center have:

- a shortened length of time to disposition<sup>4</sup>;
- increased rates of prosecution<sup>5</sup>;
- more satisfaction on the part of child victims and their non-offending caregivers<sup>6</sup>;
- higher levels of service provision for medical evaluations; and
- increased referrals for mental health treatment than non-CAC cases<sup>7</sup>.

In short, the coordinated multidisciplinary team approach used by CACs has shown that it is possible to reduce trauma to child victims of abuse while improving the legal outcome of cases and holding offenders accountable. And, at a time when financial resources are limited at every level of government, Children's Advocacy Centers have been demonstrated *to save on average over \$1,000 per child abuse case* compared to non-CAC communities<sup>8</sup>.

While child abuse and exploitation investigations are important to the safety of victims and the accountability of offenders, we must also help victims learn to cope with the trauma they have endured. Child sexual abuse and exploitation have well-documented life-long effects. Victims of child sexual abuse are more likely than their non-abused counterparts to become pregnant as teens, to drop out of high school, to abuse substances, to engage in self-destructive and risk-taking behavior, and to experience anxiety and depression. As adults, these individuals have increased morbidity and mortality, suffering from a host of physical and mental ailments at higher rates than their non-abused peers.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, their own children are more likely to suffer sexual abuse during the course of their lifetimes than other children. This is truly the saddest possible cycle of abuse.<sup>10</sup>

This host of maladies is the result of the trauma caused by abuse. Child abuse and exploitation victims experience rates of trauma symptoms (hyperarousal, fear, sleep disturbances, anxiety,

<sup>4</sup> Walsh, W.A., Lippert, T., Cross, T. P., Maurice, D. M. & Davison, K. S. (2008). How long to prosecute child sexual abuse for community using a children's advocacy center and two comparison communities? *Child Maltreatment*, 13(1), 3-13.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, D. W., Witte, T. H., & Fricker-Elhai, A. E. (2006). Service outcomes in physical and sexual abuse cases: A comparison of child advocacy center-based and standard services. *Child Maltreatment*, 11(4), 354-60

<sup>6</sup> Lalayants, M., & Epstein, I. (2005). Evaluating multidisciplinary child abuse and neglect teams: a research agenda. *Child Welfare*, 84(4), 433-58.

<sup>7</sup> Smith et al 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Formby, J., Shadoin, A. L., Shao, L, Magnuson, S. N., & Overman, L. B. (2006). Cost-benefit Analysis of community responses to child maltreatment: A comparison of communities with and without Child Advocacy Centers. (Research Report No. 06-3). Huntsville, AL: National Children's Advocacy Center

<sup>9</sup> Dube S.R., Anda R.F., Whitfield C.L., Brown D.W., Felitti V.J., Dong M., Giles W.H. (2005). Long-term consequences of childhood sexual abuse by gender of victim. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 28 (5), pp. 430-438.

<sup>10</sup> Penelope K. Trickett, Jennie G. Noll and Frank W. Putnam (2011). The impact of sexual abuse on female development: Lessons from a multigenerational, longitudinal research study. *Development and Psychopathology*, 23 , pp 453-476 doi:10.1017/S0954579411000174

depression) at rates verging on those experienced by war veterans. Fortunately, much has been learned over the past 15 years about successfully treating trauma in children. Every child/youth who has been the victim of abuse deserves to be assessed to see if they would benefit from mental health treatment, and if so, to have it provided to them promptly.

Abused children served within Children's Advocacy Centers have access to such trauma-focused, evidence-supported mental health treatment. In addition, Children's Advocacy Centers, through Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) grants awarded by National Children's Alliance, focus on the needs of child sex trafficking victims by designing programs that support a coordinated and expanded response to effectively identify and treat trafficking victims. For the over 286,000 children served within Children's Advocacy Centers last year, including the child sex trafficking victims, there is no doubt that the care they received was improved, and the suffering they experienced was reduced, for having had access to such targeted treatment.

#### **In Summary**

Child sexual abuse is far too common experience for America's children. And, with the number of child sex trafficking cases skyrocketing, the ability of Children's Advocacy Centers to serve as first responders is critical. Therefore, as you and your colleagues on the U.S. Senate Finance Committee draft legislation focusing on the federal government's role in combating child sex trafficking, I encourage you to examine the time-tested Children's Advocacy Center/Multidisciplinary Team model as an effective, evidence-based approach to combating child sex trafficking and minimizing re-victimization.

Thank you again for your consideration.

