



# Human Trafficking Update

December 2018

EDITORIAL

## Why the “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” Debate Matters

I went public this holiday.

In the early days of December, among my friends and family on Facebook, I came forward and said that I am among the women offended by the lyrics of the song, “Baby, It’s Cold Outside.”

A part of me felt that I’d been silent for too long as other people had come forward to voice their concerns over the lyrics. Another part of me was curious about how my friends and family would respond. Feeling a little cheeky, I even challenged them to try to change my mind.

The reactions were eye-opening.

A few of my friends and colleagues admitted they, too, disliked the song. Are creeped out by the lyrics. Understand the concerns that many women have. Think it’s about time the song is retired.

The most interesting part of the conversation to me was the reaction from those who disagreed.

Some told me it was an old song that should be taken in its historical context. Some told me that they were frustrated by how everyone seems to be offended by something – so it’s not worth the hassle of even having the conversation. Some pointed to worse examples of sexism in pop culture. Some turned the debate to whether it’s un-American to ban content and whether artists are responsible for what people see in their work.

I understand it can be uncomfortable having these conversations. And I appreciate the willingness of my friends to engage in the debate. Conversation is essential if we’re going to begin to understand one another, and grow through those other perspectives.

At the same time, I challenge them to understand just how simple a story it is.

A man and a woman are alone together. The woman says it’s time for her to go home. Repeatedly. The man needles and badgers her to change her mind. Repeatedly.

He will not accept that no means no. And that's dangerous – particularly when you accept the scenario as a romantic holiday interlude. There is nothing romantic about a woman being pressured into any compromising situation. About a woman being coerced into staying when she wants to go home.

The song may have been written to indicate something very different in the 1940s. But we're in the year 2018. And songs on the radio don't come with Cliff's Notes to help you understand historical context. We need to appreciate that songs heard today have implications for what people see as acceptable now. They affect what our young people, in particular, understand as appropriate social behavior.

We are in the time of the #MeToo movement, when women are struggling to be heard about their own experiences of being coerced, disrespected – even raped and trafficked. When women are working hard to get society to understand that often, the worst cases of abuse start with men not taking no for an answer.

I do not believe in banning content. For me, this is a matter of what we see as personally acceptable. And this debate is a new journey for me, as well. My preferred path has long been to simply disengage from things that I find offensive and problematic.

But in recent months, I have come to understand that it's far more important to press these difficult conversations. Because it's how we make ourselves heard, understand other perspectives, and become a stronger society in which everyone is respected, protected, and permitted to thrive.

## Agency Launches Toolkit for Faith-Based Organizations

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has released a new [Faith-Based and Community Toolkit](#). The toolkit offers tips and resources to raise awareness about human trafficking. It also provides assistance for building stronger partnerships with social services agencies, advocacy groups, and law enforcements.

The toolkit has posters to display in houses of worship, community events, and public places. It also shows the next steps in developing trauma-informed approaches in houses of worship.

The toolkit was developed by the DHS [Blue Campaign](#) and the Center for Faith and Opportunity. It's available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Learn more about other [DHS Blue Campaign Resources](#), including the [General Awareness Training Video](#).

### Human Trafficking Awareness Program

**DATE:** Saturday, January 19, 2019

**TIME:** 10 am – 1 pm Eastern

**PLACE:** George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Conference Room, Annandale, VA 22003.

## Catholic Church Addresses the United Nations

On November 9, 2018, Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See, addressed the United Nations Conference on the eradication of human trafficking.

In these remarks, he noted that 40 million people globally remain trapped by modern slavery, and observed the growing gap between the commitments of the international community, national governments, and civil society.

Archbishop Auza stated that the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons provides four helpful objectives to fight the plague of human trafficking: Prevent trafficking in persons by addressing what drives it; Protect and assist victims; Prosecute those involved in the crime of trafficking; and Promote partnerships among governmental institutions and all stakeholders to eradicate trafficking and rehabilitate survivors.

To read Archbishop Auza's remarks, go to <https://holyseemission.org/contents/statements/5be61bb130c7e.php>

## How Human Trafficking Impacts Native Americans

Native Americans are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. Learn more about how modern slavery impacts native Americans through the video [here](#).

The Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign has also created a new poster series to raise awareness in native American communities, titled "Human Trafficking is not the Native Way." Download these posters [here](#)

## Human Trafficking as a Public Health Issue

ImPACT Virginia is a nonprofit organization that raises awareness about human trafficking. The organization is led by Fay Chelmow, a nurse who saw the trauma that victims suffered in their slavery.

ImPACT Virginia believes it's time for human trafficking to be addressed as a public health issue. That would mean focusing on advocacy and education to help keep people safe from abuse. It would also mean streamlining protocols and measure used to care for and identify victims when they go to a hospital for treatment.

More can be done to adopt best practices, unify treatment, and standardize metrics to determine impact and care. For more information visit <https://www.wavy.com/news/virginia/advocates-pitch-public-health-approach-to-va-leaders-to-stop-sex-trafficking/1641974191>

## Senate Approves New Alert System for Missing Adults

The U.S. Senate has unanimously passed a bill titled The Ashanti Alert Act of 2018. The Act is designed to issue alerts for missing adults between the ages of 18-64, and would operate much like Amber Alerts for missing children.

The Act is named after 19-year-old Ashanti Billie, a Prince George's County, Maryland, native who disappeared from a military base in Hampton Roads, Virginia, in September 2017. Her body was found in North Carolina two weeks later. Navy veteran Eric Brian Brown, 45, was charged with her abduction and murder.

For more information go to <https://wtop.com/local/2018/12/ashanti-alert-md-familys-tragedy-could-spark-new-alert-for-missing-adults/>

# Human Trafficking Update

---

*A regular newsletter  
created by the*

*Human Trafficking Task  
Force of the Annandale  
United Methodist Church*

*Submit story ideas to  
Kristine Grow, Editor,  
[krstngrow@gmail.com](mailto:krstngrow@gmail.com)*

## Polaris CEO Addresses Georgetown University

Ambassador Mark Lagon recently addressed an audience at Georgetown University, saying that while sex trafficking and labor trafficking are equally important, large companies have not taken measures to address labor trafficking issues.

Lagon served as the ambassador-at-large to monitor and combat trafficking in persons under former President George W. Bush. He is now the CEO of the Polaris Group, a Washington, D.C.-based nongovernmental organization focused on the eradication of global slavery.

“Moving forward, there will be a rebalancing so that sex traffic is not marginalized, but one also hopes that the labor issue is not de-prioritized because it is found less attractive, or frankly that the business community finds complicated to deal with and its supply chains,” Lagon said.

Though Lagon spent his time as ambassador-at-large focusing on preventing labor trafficking, the balance between the two sides of human trafficking has shifted during the tenures of different administrations.

Trafficking victims who are without documentation may not seek legal recourse because of their status, yet deserve just as much protection.

“There is a certain category of undocumented migrants who isn’t at fault, who were lied to, who was so brutally exploited that they deserve to be treated as a victim of human trafficking and be protected,” Lagon said.

To learn more, go to <http://www.thehoya.com/current-policy-neglects-victims-labor-trafficking-ambassador-says/>

**National Human  
Trafficking Hotline  
1-888-3737-888**