



Human Trafficking Update

February 2020

EDITORIAL

Administration Invests in Fight Against Trafficking

Washington Post: Late last month, President Trump signed an executive order that would create a position within his domestic policy team dedicated to fighting human trafficking. The executive order also proposes an additional \$42 million in funding for service programs and prosecutions. Programs would include a federal working group on housing for survivors, and a Website listing the government's anti-trafficking resources.

The President credited his daughter, Ivanka Trump, for championing the initiative.

The executive order was signed during a summit commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which established human trafficking as a federal crime.

While the executive order is a welcome move, several organizations remain critical of the Administration's treatment of trafficking survivors who are immigrants. Prosecutions of traffickers have also dipped from 531 in fiscal 2016 to 343 in fiscal 2019.

[Read more.](#)

National Human Trafficking Hotline

1-888-3737-888

Text: 233733

Secretary Chao Calls for Education and Awareness

Transport Topics: Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao called on transportation industry leaders to fight human trafficking by educating their workforce on the issue.

In her speech, Chao placed a renewed focus on the Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking pledge, which calls on participants to educate employees on how to recognize signs of human trafficking, raise awareness about the issue through outreach campaigns and measure the industry's impact on human trafficking by sharing data. Chao asked the transportation industry to commit to 100 pledges in 100 days. More than 250 pledges have already been signed by various industry representatives, including state and local departments of transportation, transit agencies, trucking companies, ports, rail groups, airlines and nongovernmental organizations.

More than 1 million employees across all modes of transportation will be trained because of this initiative. In addition, the agency will award \$5.4 million in grants through the Federal Transit Administration to address public safety issues, including human trafficking. Through the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, DOT has awarded over \$1 million in grants to support efforts at the state level.

[Read more.](#)

Listen to Barbara Amaya's TED Talk

Barbara Amaya was trafficked for 10 years, first as a child then as an adult. Today, she is a well-respected leader and activist advocating for laws that destigmatize victims and help them rebuild their lives.

She recently delivered a TED Talk in which she talked about her experiences, and what more Americans can do to fight trafficking.

[Check out the TED Talk](#)

Rebecca Bender Initiative Needs Your Support

THORN: Rebecca Bender is a survivor of human trafficking, and a leader in the fight. She was lured into the life by a man she trusted, who convinced her to move to Las Vegas with him, then used her daughter as leverage against her.

After 6 years, she was able to get herself and her daughter out – only to face mountains of challenges that included homelessness, no college degree, a criminal record, and a lack of support. She has established the Rebecca Bender Initiative to help survivors get support and services for their recovery. Without such services, survivors are far more likely to fall back into victimization.

To donate or learn more, go to rebeccabender.org

[Read more of Rebecca's story.](#)

Boys and Men Are Victimized Too

Fight the New Drug: An essential reminder: While women and girls are the vast majority of victims of sex trafficking, men and boys are also victimized. Particularly as children.

According to a 2016 study, boys account for 36% of child sex trafficking victims. But with other studies reporting that 98% of sex trafficking victims are female, it's an underreported problem. Experts say that men and boys are plagued by the same stigma and stereotypes that have plagued women and girls.

Experts are also clear to say that being a male victims of sex trafficking is not about being LGBTQ: it's about exploitation. But it is also important to remember that people who identify as LGBTQ are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked because of a lack of family or community support or other support services.

[Read more.](#)

Virginia Bill Delayed

WAVY: Last month, a bill was introduced in the Virginia legislature that would have cleared human trafficking survivors of criminal charges incurred as a result of being trafficked.

But rather than putting it to a vote this session, state lawmakers have sent the bill to the Virginia State Crime Commission for a year-long study. It is expected the bill will go for a vote during the 2021 session

Virginia is 15th in the nation for reported cases of human trafficking. It is one of only six states with no expungement relief for survivors.

[Learn more.](#)

Standing Rock Tribe Develops Response Team

Fox News: The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has created an immediate protocol and response team to fight human trafficking on the reservation. Children are increasingly being trafficked on the reservation, including children as young as 11 years old.

The protocol team provides support services, including aftercare and housing.

[Read more.](#)

Tracking Your Child Through Technology

Afrotech: Taylor Baloney is founder and CEO of Find My Everything, a tech startup. The startup launched an app called Gotcha, a GPS tracking device that can help you find lost items. Now, she's taking that technology to see how it can be applied to human trafficking.

Gotcha allows you to place a tracker on devices and keep them all catalogued on your phone. By tracking phones, iPads and other devices, it may be a way to provide parents and guardians with a mechanism for tracking children. Baloney is partnering with Love Never Fails, a nonprofit organization that works to stop trafficking.

[Read more.](#)

Motel 6 Joins Human Trafficking Fight

Press Release: Motel 6 is partnering with Truckers Against Trafficking and New Friends New Life to fight human trafficking.

Truckers Against Trafficking is a nonprofit organization that trains people who work in the trucking, bus and energy industries to identify trafficking and take appropriate action when they see it. New Friends New Life is a Dallas-based organization that supports survivors through job training, education, mental health care, and financial support.

The collaboration is the latest of several initiatives that Motel 6 has put into place to end trafficking. [Learn more](#) about Motel 6's programs.

Virginia Medical Professionals Talk About Training

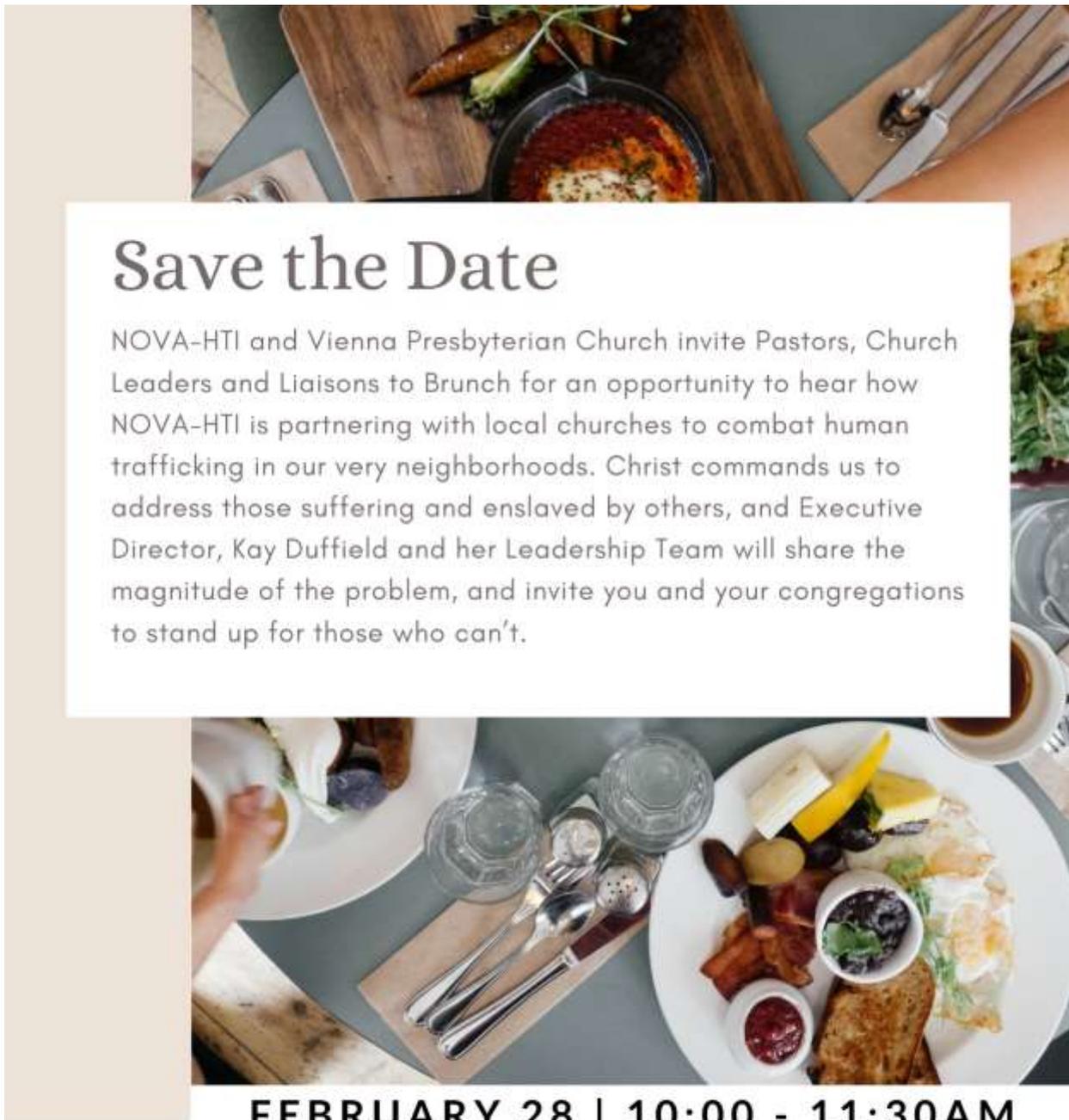
Inside NOVA: The Just Ask Prevention Project recently conducted an educational event in which part of the focus was encouraging medical professionals to get trained on recognizing signs of trafficking.

According to Dr. Swati Shirali, who represented Just Ask Prevention, only 3 percent of medical providers are properly trained to assess a patient who is being trafficked. At the same time, 90 percent of trafficking victims see a doctor at some point during their exploitation.

While doctors cannot disclose the medical history of their patients due to federal privacy laws, they can report children they suspect are being victimized.

To contact the Just Ask Prevention Project, call (833) ASK2END or go to www.justaskprevention.org.

[Learn more.](#)



Save the Date

NOVA-HTI and Vienna Presbyterian Church invite Pastors, Church Leaders and Liaisons to Brunch for an opportunity to hear how NOVA-HTI is partnering with local churches to combat human trafficking in our very neighborhoods. Christ commands us to address those suffering and enslaved by others, and Executive Director, Kay Duffield and her Leadership Team will share the magnitude of the problem, and invite you and your congregations to stand up for those who can't.

FEBRUARY 28 | 10:00 - 11:30AM

FAITH. JUSTICE. FREEDOM
NOVA-HTI



VIENNA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | 124 PARK STREET, NE | VIENNA, VA 22180

Human Trafficking Update

A regular newsletter created by the Human Trafficking Task Force of the Annandale United Methodist Church

Submit story ideas and questions to Kristine Grow, Editor, krstngrow@gmail.com

Protecting Your Children Online

Online predators are increasingly using chat apps and multiplayer games to connect with children. In a recent piece in *The New York Times*, experts offer advice for how adults can keep children safe:

- **Set rules and boundaries** for when and how your children can connect with others online.
- **Spend time with your children** as they use the app or game.
- **Talk to your children about online safety.** Listen to their concerns and answer their questions.
- **Encourage your children to go to an adult if they are worried.** Trust and knowing that trusted adults are a safe place will give children comfort in going to them with problems.
- **Look for warning signs of abuse.** Some of the most common include a child who spends too much time online, and angry reactions if an adult intervenes to stop the connection.
- **Tell children how to block people** who make them uncomfortable online. If a person continues to try to contact the child, call local police.
- **Do not blame the child.** Children who are abused are victims.
- **Know that you are your children's protector.** Because no one else is taking on that job. Be confident in that role.

[Read more.](#)

Polaris and PayPal Join Forces

Press Release: Polaris has launched a Financial Intelligence Unit to interrupt the cash flow of human traffickers, make it more difficult for them to move money, and support prosecutions for financial crimes like money laundering. The unit was launched with the financial support and expertise of PayPal.

Polaris has done a lot of research on environments that allow human trafficking to thrive. That research includes an examination of how traffickers use public and private systems and industries for their business endeavors.

Contact Polaris at polarisproject.org

[Learn more.](#)