Sex Trafficking Prevention in Georgia: Equipping Hotel Workers with the Proper Resources

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Thesis
Employees of hotels and motels should be required to undergo training that teaches them how to recognize the signs of sex trafficking and how to report those signs to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Background Analysis
Human trafficking, referred to as “modern-day slavery,” is not only a crime but a human rights abuse. Its perpetrators use force, coercion, or fraud to manipulate victims into forms of servitude such as sexual exploitation or forced labor. Human trafficking is the world’s fastest growing criminal industry, estimated to generate $32 billion annually. Furthermore, the FBI ranks Atlanta as one of the top cities for child sex trafficking. However, this form of trafficking pervades almost every part of Georgia.

Under Georgia HB 141, certain establishments, including hotels and motels, are required to post a notice to enable subjects of trafficking to obtain help. This is not sufficient to address the relationship between lodging areas and human trafficking. From December 2007 to February 2015, 1,434 cases of human trafficking in hotels and motels were reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) and Polaris, 92 percent of which were sex trafficking. Traffickers capitalize on the privacy and anonymity offered by lodging establishments and are able to operate with low risk when staff and the community are not aware of the signs of human trafficking. Sex trafficking victims are required to go to rooms rented out by customers (out-call) or are forced to have customers come to their hotel room (in-call). Ultimately, traffickers and others in this criminal industry are capitalizing on the lack of awareness around this issue specifically within lodging businesses.

Talking Points
• Hotels and motels represent a disproportionate site of sex trafficking due to the privacy and anonymity they offer to traffickers, customers, and victims.
• Training hotel and motel employees would equip them with the proper resources to potentially identify victims of human trafficking. They would also be taught how to report this crime to the appropriate law enforcement.
• If these establishments were required to train employees on how to identify potential victims and report it to the appropriate agency, fewer sex trafficking victims would pass unnoticed through hotels or motels.

Policy Idea
Any establishment that provides lodging services should require its employees to be trained to recognize signs of sex trafficking and activities commonly associated with sex trafficking. Employees

KEY FACTS

➢ Traffickers and those who purchase from them can capitalize on the anonymity and privacy offered by lodging establishments.

➢ The Polaris Project and the NHTRC reported that from December 2007 to February 2015 there had been 1,434 reported cases of trafficking in hotels and motels, of which 92 percent were related to sex trafficking. Forty-five percent of the victims were minors, and 94 percent of the victims were female.

➢ The average age of entry into the commercial sex market for women and girls is 12–14.

➢ According to a 2012 BEST study, 63 percent of trafficking incidents happen in hotels.
should be taught how to report signs of trafficking to the appropriate agency or law enforcement. By October 2018, the training should be incorporated into the initial training process for all new employees and those employees who do not receive an initial training should also undergo the training. The Georgia Department for Justice would compile the proper resources and distribute them to lodging establishments.

Policy Analysis
Georgia has actively taken many steps to counter sex trafficking, but these solutions are concerned with the justice system and how victims go through the judicial process. For example, the Safe Harbor Law addresses inconsistencies with how children exploited for commercial sex are treated by the courts. While these policies are important, more needs to be done to identify victims and potential victims so that they can be removed from a dangerous situation and provided with restorative resources. The Safe Harbor Amendment, which sets up a fund to aid child sex trafficking victims, would be instrumental in this regard. While these policies are important, more needs to be done to identify victims and potential victims so that they can be removed from a dangerous situation and provided with restorative resources. The Safe Harbor Amendment, which sets up a fund to aid child sex trafficking victims, would be instrumental in this regard. The NHTRC reports that from 2007 to 2015 only 22 percent of the calls reporting trafficking in hotels and motels were made by victims self-reporting the crimes against them. Over three-quarters of the calls were reported by people who either observed suspicious activity or came into contact with a victim. If employees are on the lookout for trafficking and report it when they see it, it will be much more difficult for traffickers and those purchasing sex to get away with crimes. This policy can have a positive benefit for everyone in the state of Georgia. Trafficking in lodging establishments presents a risk for the safety and security of the hotel as well as for lawful hotel customers. Furthermore, many approved training presentations are available online, so it will be relatively cost-effective for the Department of Justice to create a proper training guide. Etiam at nulla id nulla blandit accumsan. Nunc ex dui, imperdiet eget

Next Steps
The Georgia legislature will need to pass this policy to require lodging establishments to train their employees to recognize and report signs of sex trafficking. We will connect with relevant legislators and stakeholders who can move our policy forward through the Georgia legislature. Senator Renee Unterman from District 45 has strongly advocated for laws pertaining to trafficking and for the proper treatment of trafficking victims. If approached properly, we are confident that she would sponsor this policy. Key organizations such as YouthSpark, Georgia Cares, and Street Grace should form a coalition for joint advocacy to bring this policy to Georgia Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Lobby Day. At this event, held annually in February, Georgia activists lobby for laws relating to domestic minor sex trafficking. This policy idea would gain traction at a statewide event such as this.

End Notes


11 Ibid.


14 Ibid
