

August 26, 2005

Compiled by Alexys Vasström—Summer Intern  
Department on the Status of Women

I have been studying human trafficking and slavery in the United States for two years. It began with an article by Peter Landesman entitled *The Girls Next Door* in The New York Times Magazine (January 2001). I have written two academic papers detailing child sex trafficking and U.S. law and policy regarding human trafficking, respectively. I have also completed an internship in San Francisco's Department on the Status of Women, where I was in regular contact with five municipalities across the United States: Baltimore, Miami-Dade, Los Angeles, El Paso, and New York. Through dialogue with City and State officials, I was able to gather information about existing or non-existent anti-trafficking policies and/or initiatives. I compiled statistics of City funding for violence against women programs, as well as reported violent crimes against women. In my two months working for the City, I attended anti-trafficking meetings with various City officials, including a personal meeting with Mayor Newsom discussing the scope of the problem. Included in my report are a variety of recommendations that I deemed crucial for the initial steps in San Francisco's move against trafficking. At the conclusion of my internship, I made a public presentation of my work to the Commission on the Status of Women, at the end of which my President publicly invited me back to the City upon my completion of college.

The following is the report that is the concluding product of my internship.

### **Introduction**

Human trafficking is a troubling issue that has reached across United States' borders and into the lives of the American public. It is indiscriminate, violating women, children, and men. Trafficking affects families, relationships, and leaves millions vulnerable, hurting, and with no resources. Although countries from which people are taken are typically impoverished or experiencing economic and political strife, American-born youth are not safe from the same predators that prey on the foreign-born.

The Department on the Status of Women in the City and County of San Francisco researched the various measures that different municipalities around the country are

taking to address the problem of human trafficking and to identify advantageous additions to existing or non-existent policies.

We contacted the Los Angeles Police Department, the New York Commission on the Status of Women, the Miami-Dade Domestic Crimes Unit and Bureau, the El Paso Police Department, the El Paso Human Trafficking Task-Force, the Baltimore Commission on the Status of Women, the Baltimore Police Department's Crime Analysis Bureau, and a variety of other governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to determine local responses to trafficking and violence against women programming. The Department asked a series of questions:

- How much funding do departments allot for Violence against Women (VAW) programs?
- The amount of funding cities receive from federal agencies to address the current problem of human trafficking
- Do city budgets include anti-trafficking measures?
- Do city-funded or privately-funded human trafficking shelters exist within municipality limits?
- Has a task force been established to combat the issue of human trafficking?
- Have city-wide protocols been developed in response to trafficking?
- What are the recorded statistics of VAW in individual municipalities for the past three years?

We found a lack of gender-differentiation in many violent crime statistics, particularly in the realms of domestic violence and sexual assault. Whereas domestic violence can affect men and women, and can be perpetuated by both men and women, there are few—if any—cognitive breakdowns of gender analyses. When questioning the lack of gender studies, we were told that cities “save millions of dollars”<sup>i</sup> by bypassing the recording of gender. In most cases, in order to attain gender-specific information, one must sit down with each individual case file and determine manually whether each victim

and/or offender were female or male. The result of not having readily-available gender statistics makes the study of violent crime against women difficult to analyze.

The Department on the Status of Women in the City and County of San Francisco receives more funding than any other municipality surveyed for VAW programs, providing crisis intervention and advocacy services; prevention, education, and training programs; and shelter and transitional housing services. Our goal was to find another municipality which receives more city funding and has created a more comprehensive anti-trafficking agenda.

We find that some municipalities have enacted comprehensive trafficking policies. While using the existing work of others as a model, as well as utilizing the monies we are allocated from our City, we hope to influence the beginning of a national trend towards victim-recognition and assistance, as well as induction of policy created with the protection of the victim and heavy prosecution of the trafficker in mind.

### **History**

In 1998, President Clinton, recognizing the impact of trafficking and violence against women, issued the first *Presidential Directive on Steps to Combat Violence against Women and Trafficking in Women and Girls*. In the directive, President Clinton described the trafficking of humans for exploitation as a “fundamental human rights violation.”<sup>ii</sup> The Administration committed itself to taking critical action against the trafficking of human beings in a global context. Through dialogue with various Asian countries, such as those in the Mekong Region (including Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos), funds were allocated for the reintegration of women sent back to their home countries upon release from United States’ custody. Money was also allocated for the return of victims to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 1999, the United States, in conjunction with Japanese officials and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), conducted a two-week training program on illegal migration and trafficking in women and children at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok, Thailand. At the 1999 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) conference, the United States stressed the relevance of

human trafficking in the OSCE region and, together with summit participants, called for the implementation of the *Action Plan to Combat Trafficking* by all OCSE member states.

In October 2000, Congress and President George W. Bush signed into law the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act* (TVPA) (Public Law 106-386). Prior to the enactment of TVPA, no comprehensive federal law existed to protect the victims of trafficking or to prosecute their traffickers. The TVPA was created with three goals in mind: 1) to prevent human trafficking overseas; 2) to protect victims and provide them with the resources necessary to establish a healthy life in the United States with U.S. federal support; and 3) to prosecute traffickers under federal statutes.

In 2001, the United States published its first *Assessment of U.S. Government Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons*. The report was created in order to gauge the progress of the United States' implementation of the TVPA. It included a comprehensive review of current policies, suggestions for the future, and alternative paths to existing policy.

In 2003, the *Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act* (TVPRA) (Public Law 108-193) was passed. The TVPRA includes legislation that failed to be included in the TVPA, yet was found to be relevant and important in years following. The first *Trafficking in Persons Report*, examining the progress of the international community in the battle against trafficking and exploitation, was issued in 2003. This report has been repeated annually since.

Over the past four years, President George W. Bush has appealed to the United Nations on various occasions, calling for action against the trafficking and enslavement of human beings for commercial purposes. The Bush Administration has pledged over \$300 million during its two terms in office—the money being delegated to various countries across the globe.

The issue of trafficking and human slavery has finally reached the limelight. The international community recognizes the problem and pledges to stop it. The fight is not over, solutions have not been discovered. As long as the trade continues, the fight against slavery will not end. It is up to us to battle this “special kind of evil.”<sup>iii</sup>

### **Methodology**

The Department on the Status of Women undertook a research-based study to understand trends of reported violence against women in specific municipalities in the United States, as well as gather numbers of city-funding for VAW programs and local anti-trafficking agendas.

The municipalities surveyed were selected with two primary criteria: 1) cities that have anti-trafficking policies in place and/or have a potentially high trafficked population and 2) cities similar in population size to San Francisco. We surveyed public officials, discussed various policies, solutions, and non-governmental strides with members of non-governmental organizations, contacted crime analysts, and studied various statistical records regarding VAW and other issues relevant to women in order to make this report as comprehensive as possible. Whenever possible, the data presented in this report has been derived directly from primary sources rather than from secondary sources or summaries. Unfortunately, much of the report regarding domestic trafficking and statistics of violence against women is speculative, as there is a lack of statistical data, effective record-keeping, and the nationally-recognized problem of infrequency of reporting.

### **Demographics**

- As of 2004, San Francisco holds the largest Asian population of the five cities surveyed, Asians comprising 30.8% of the city's recorded 744,230 inhabitants.
- As of 2004, El Paso holds the largest percentage of Latin/Hispanic<sup>iv</sup> population in the five cities surveyed: Latins/Hispanics comprising 78.2% of the city's recorded 563,662 inhabitants. Miami-Dade comes up second with 57.3% of their population being of Latin/Hispanic origin and Los Angeles is third with 44.6%.
- As of 2004, New York has the highest overall population with 8,104,079 inhabitants. Los Angeles has 3,845,541, then Miami-Dade with 2,363,600, San Francisco with 744,230, Baltimore with 636,251, and El Paso remaining with 563,662 registered inhabitants. It is important to remember that these are people

who are detected and recorded; the numbers do not reflect any immigrants of illegal status, homeless, or those who have been brought to the United States through secretive and coercive measures.

### **Anti-Trafficking Procedures and Protocol**

We found that most municipalities addressed the issue of trafficking. Unfortunately, some municipalities had abandoned anti-trafficking measures for various reasons, had no prior or existing policies, or were completely unaware of the scope of human trafficking, specifically of any trafficking that occurred within their municipality or state borders.

➤ **Los Angeles, California**

The Los Angeles Commission on the Status of Women established an anti-trafficking program in April 2004. The program started with a motion by Councilman Tony Cardenas to create interagency protocols to address the problem of sex trafficking. A community outreach forum was created in order to inform the public about trafficking, as well as an established training component to train community-based organizations (CBOs) and enforcement officials about the signs and responses to trafficking and trafficking victims. Los Angeles created a task force, but it was disbanded after 9 months.

Over the period of those 9 months, through task force meetings with local, state, and federal agencies, the City of Los Angeles created a list of recommendations in the areas of: 1) outreach; 2) education; 3) protocols; and 4) law enforcement. In order to put these recommendations into action, they are still searching for federal funding. These recommendations include protocol developing ways to educate the public and train public officials. A press conference was held on Sept 27, 2005 revealing Los Angeles' new public awareness campaign, which their task force deemed to be the most important endeavor in the initial fight against trafficking of persons.

The conclusion of the 9-month task force was a recommendation to disband the force and, in the meantime, working from the other recommendations, create a working collaborative called Trafficking and Slavery Cooperative (TASC). The goal

of this cooperative is to convene, discuss, make more recommendations, write protocols and lobby for funding. As of October 2005, TASC has not yet banded.

Despite the fact that TASC has not yet coalesced, the Los Angeles Commission on the Status of Women has held a number of round-table discussions with a variety of non-profits, for-profits, governmental organizations, and the Los Angeles Police Department, discussing what services are immediately available and what services need to be offered. As a result of these meetings, there have been some conclusions: L.A.'s Vice Division needs better investigation methods when potential victims are found in order to determine whether the men, women, or children are victims of trafficking. There should also be a designated safe-place for people who are undergoing determinative investigation. The Commission has made a recommendation to the police department to allow a thirty-day waiting period for victims to come forward with information regarding trafficking. This waiting period has not yet been enacted.

The findings of the initial task force have been submitted for review to city government agencies. The Commission on the Status of Women in Los Angeles is vying for anti-trafficking monies from the Community Development Department, the California Analyst Office (CAO), and the Los Angeles Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. The Los Angeles Commission on the Status of Women is currently being reviewed by the CAO and trying to get full approval of recommendations so they can be implemented.

They are also working together with Councilman Cardenas to get federal funding and are working with his office and the Washington D.C. National Campaign (through Health and Human Resources Department) as well as the Office of Refugee Resettlement. They are working to tie-in and partner with a new or pre-existing movement to get a coalition of organizations to work on a conjunctive public awareness campaign, as this was the headlining recommendation of the 9 month task force.

➤ El Paso, Texas

In El Paso, a city with a high immigrant population, an anti-trafficking task force has been established. Headed by Sergeant Valencia of the Intelligence Division, it began receiving funding in January 2005. In El Paso, there is a consistently high influx of immigrants coming from Mexico. Often, the immigration is illegal. Sergeant Valencia's primary concern is that there is trafficking of women and children into the United States for forced exploitation that is not being detected. The initial funding came from the Department of Justice (DOJ) through a \$500,000 grant.

According to Sergeant Valencia, \$250,000 went to creating the task force, which is comprised of eight (8) detectives and Sergeant Valencia. A position has been created for a Human Trafficking Coordinator. It is a civilian job and is currently unfilled. It will be paid \$30,000 annually, plus benefits. It is expected to be filled by September 2005. To our knowledge, this is the only city-paid trafficking-specific position in the United States to date. There is also money allocated for a public awareness campaign. A committee has been formed, specifically designed to create memorandums and lobby legislators.

There is no city-funded trafficking shelter. If trafficked women are found, various non-profits in the area work on their behalf: either refugee centers or the Salvation Army. The women may receive some counseling services and temporary job assistance, but it is dependent upon what the Department of Immigration and Customs has to say about the various cases. The El Paso Police Department does not support 24-hour personal surveillance of the non-profits who house the victims, citing alarm systems should be enough protection for the victims from their traffickers.

There is one trafficking victim-specific shelter in the area, but given the sensitive nature of the shelter, no other information is available for publication.

➤ Baltimore, Maryland

When we spoke to the Commission on the Status of Women in Baltimore about the issue of human trafficking, we asked whether there were funds allocated to the combat or the spreading of awareness regarding the problem. We were met with a surprised, "No, we don't have problems with trafficking here."<sup>v</sup>

The Baltimore Commission on the Status of Women is uninformed in the scope of human trafficking. They are unaware of any trafficking cases within their city or state lines.

➤ Miami-Dade, Florida

We had a good deal of contact with various departments in Miami-Dade and Florida State. There is no specific program in action to combat or study the rates of human trafficking in Florida or Miami-Dade County. The problem of trafficking, however, is on the radar.

➤ New York, New York

The City of New York does not have any anti-trafficking protocols.

International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA) in conjunction with End Child Prostitution and Trafficking-USA (ECPAT-USA), two non-profit organizations based in New York City, have taken up the anti-trafficking battle. Together, through continued round-table discussions with various non-governmental and community-based organizations, as well as with members of the New York Police Department, District Attorney's Office, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Immigration and Customs, they created the *Community Response to Trafficking* (CRT). First published in 2002 and updated in the three years following, it provides guidelines for responding to trafficking victims in New York City. There are five parts to this response, each outlining what to do when facing a potential victim of trafficking. The responses are dependant upon the position of the responder. There is included: Discovery of Trafficking Victim by a Community Based Organization or a Social Service Provider; Discovery of Trafficking Victim by the New York City Police Department; Discovery of Trafficking Victim by a New York City District Attorney; Discovery of Trafficking Victim by the New York State Organized Crime Task Force (OCTF) as part of the New York Attorney General's Office; and Discovery of Trafficking Victim by a Federal Law Enforcement Agency.

Originally funded with a grant from the DOJ in 2002, IOFA received \$200,000 for three years of work to combat the issue of trafficking in New York City. They

have tried to work with the New York Police Department in order to implement the response system the CRT outlines, but it has been difficult to find anyone in the department who is interested in listening to and finding responses to the problem of trafficking. There are three police officers who have shown dedicated interest and attend the regular meetings of round-table discussions. These officers have been active in the working group and have asked to train their own officers. The IOFA is happy about this participation by these upstanding members of the force, but is slightly disappointed that all three members come from the Vice Unit, which deals specifically with sex crimes. As the exploitation of trafficked persons is not only centered in sexual exploitation, this detracts from the need for detection of migrant laborers and domestic servants.

There have been repeat trainings for the Vice Academy, not only by the three involved officers but also by local experts and advocates, who are referred to as “partners” of the IOFA. They are in the process of training more police officers. They also do active culture-specific outreach in various communities. Every year, for the past three years, a different community or neighborhood has been targeted for awareness-building. The most recent community worked with is the South Asian community. The IOFA and their partners work with local groups who have immediate and continued access to the people of various communities.

There are no trafficking-specific shelters in New York City or in the surrounding area. Constituents of IOFA and ECPAT-USA who manage domestic violence shelters in New York have taken victims of trafficking into their shelters as safe-houses, but it is recognized that this is not enough, nor is it appropriate. Domestic violence shelters are not equipped to work with victims of trafficking. There is a need for a trafficking-victim specific shelter in the City and/or State of New York.

IOFA advocates for development of State legislation. As of August 2005, there are no State protocols to combat trafficking or provide services for the victims of trafficking. Proposals have been submitted by the IOFA and other grass-roots organizations to local and state government, but they have yet to be implemented. The IOFA has been submitting the CRT guidelines for the State to follow while developing legislation. The primary fear of IOFA is that there will be a lack of service

provision and, instead, legislation will focus solely on the apprehension and prosecution of the trafficker.

At the end of September 2005, the IOFA will lose its Federal Grant, therefore losing funding to continue with its work on the CRT and other community outreach projects. It is speculated that the Department of Justice granted certain agencies for three years and have chosen to move forward to new ones. There is an explicit fear that funding priority will be given to evangelical groups and big advertisement agencies with little passion and a lack of expert input.

The IOFA would like to receive private funding, which would limit restrictions on the outreach that they provide and the publications they produce. It is the hope of the IOFA to work at more of a grass-roots level in the future.

### **Violence Against Women**

Unlike trafficking, violence against women is a problem that is recognized nationally in the United States. There are domestic violence shelters, advocacy groups, and awareness-raising programs in schools, on billboards, and in train stations. There are classes for men and women who abuse, and psychological assistance for those who abuse or are being abused. There are laws that protect victims from abusers and programs have been created to help victims who are being pursued. There are also awareness-raising measures being taken regarding rape and sexual assaults, both for women and men who may be the targets of sex crimes.

As trafficking is most often a crime against women (80% of trafficking victims are suspected to be women and children), we thought it would be advantageous to survey the various municipalities we were in contact with about their budgets and crime numbers regarding VAW. We believe it is important to have a grasp on the scope of violence that surrounds females in order to understand the prevalence of the problem in our society so we may further raise awareness and prevent future abuses.

#### ➤ Los Angeles, California

There is only one person in the Los Angeles Police Department who works specifically on issues of violence against women. We are told that everyone helps, but

there is only one person specifically dedicated to the issue. The funding for VAW is slightly more than \$500,000. Half of this is for violence prevention, ¼ is allocated to various programs and projects, and the other ¼ serves as salary and benefits.

➤ El Paso, Texas

The El Paso Police Department receives funding for Violence against Women programs.

- There are seven case managers who deal directly with domestic violence. There is also a large pool of volunteers who are victims services trained.
- There are three city-funded domestic violence shelters in El Paso.
- The police department received a \$100,000 allocation for domestic violence awareness and combat, as well as \$130,000 for VAW programs in 2005.
  - From the Office of the Attorney General, they received \$51,000 in an Other Victims' Grant (OVAG).
  - Also from the Office of the Attorney General came \$75,000 in the form of a VAW Grant.
  - From the Federal Government, they received \$39,000 for a Victim Coordinator and Liaison Grant (VCLG), and another
  - \$53,000 for Victims of Crime Act Grant (VOCA).

➤ Baltimore, Maryland

The Baltimore Commission on the Status of Women receives a mere \$10,000 annually from their city. They previously had \$500,000 in annual city grants, but it was determined that the Baltimore Police Department was not receiving enough funding, so the grants to the Commission were cut.

All the Commissioners are volunteers. There is only one paid position. They offer no direct services to women in Baltimore. They are in desperate need of sponsors. Recently, a Friends' Group was created to fund a domestic violence awareness-raising seminar. The seminar was a success and there were a number of

donations made, including toiletry baskets for women admitted into local domestic violence shelters. The idea of the baskets was to give displaced women some comfort and welcome, receiving a basket of personal commodities upon their entry. But because the domestic violence shelters in Baltimore are so poorly funded, most baskets were dismantled in order to stock communal shelves.

According to the Baltimore Police Department, there are 5 city-funded Domestic Violence shelters in the area. There are also a number of private and non-profit domestic violence agencies and shelters in the greater Baltimore region.

➤ Miami-Dade, Florida

When we spoke to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), we were told that they allot the Violence Against Women grants in Florida. They are mandated by Congress to allocate money to prosecution efforts, law enforcement, victims, and court officer training. According to Kim Musgrove of the DCF, 25% of the money distributed goes towards prosecution, 25% towards law enforcement, 5% towards the courts (to enhance Criminal Justice Unified Family Court concepts regarding domestic violence), 30% to the victims and their services, and 15% is discretionary. We were told that they do not receive as much money as is needed to combat state-wide domestic violence, but they did not tell us exactly how much they receive annually.

In the police department, the DCF funds positions for detectives, investigators, training, and equipment such as digital cameras, uniforms, and vehicles, but do not fund for guns, ammunition, tazers, or clubs. They also fund non-governmental and non-profit agencies who work against sexual and domestic violence.

Recently, the DCF funded a sweep of domestic violence warrants. Those targeted were people who had outstanding domestic violence warrants as well as DV offenders who had violated court-mandated restrictions. The sweep was executed by a Domestic Violence Enforcement team, much like a SWAT team, in areas with high violation and outstanding warrant rates. The officers were outfitted with jackets with 'Domestic Violence Enforcement Team' emblazoned on the backs.

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women, which was established in 1995, received \$5 million in funding this year. This is less money than received in previous years—such as the \$7 million received in 1997. The Commission awards money to various state-wide and city-based organizations. Depending on what the organization is and what they are combating, as well as the quality of their proposal and application, they are awarded varying amounts of money, from \$50,000 to \$150,000 respectively. Statewide organizations receive higher dollars. Domestic violence, in 2005, has been allocated \$1 million. Sexual violence has received \$132,000; prosecutor training: \$138,000; and \$24,110 has gone to training judges.

The Florida Counsel against Sexual Violence (FCSV) is the department that deals with trafficking issues. This is seen through funding of efforts against child abuse, as well as providing service to women. They are not permitted by law to advertise in schools or camps unless they are collegiate. The FCSV is a non-governmental association.

➤ New York, New York

After a number of failed phone attempts to gather statistical and economic data regarding violence against women, a request was sent to New York in early July 2005, asking that statistics and information regarding VAW be sent to the Department on the Status of Women. We have yet to receive this information.

### **Challenges**

Overall, we had great success dialoguing with various members of different municipalities. We acquired a good deal of data and expanded our knowledge of the various advancements taking place around the United States. However, we were met with some difficulties when accumulating the data for presentation in this report.

It was very hard to secure information from New York. We called a variety of city departments and resources in the hope that someone would talk to us about the issue of human trafficking in New York City. We were met with line transfer after line transfer until we were faced with the inevitable line disconnection. For two months we tried to secure information from this municipality to no avail. The New York Police

Department's Crime Analysis Bureau suggested that we write a letter of request for violence against women statistics, but were told that it would take at least three months to process the request and gather the information we required. We have yet to receive said information. After two months of trying to get in touch with someone who would speak to us about trafficking, we managed to get in touch with IOFA who gave us a comprehensive overview of the pursuits of the City as well as community-based organizations. We were unable to secure any information regarding violence against women in the New York City metropolitan area. It is unfortunate that IOFA is not City-affiliated. We believe conjunctive work with IOFA would be of great benefit to New York City.

It was extremely difficult to obtain comprehensive gender analyses when gathering records of violence statistics. Many cities have abandoned the recording of the statistic, which is counter-active to the study of violence against women. If the gender of the perpetrator and the victim is not recorded when documenting a domestic violence case, how is the study of domestic violence going to be advanced? If the gender of the perpetrator and the victim is not recorded in a reported sexual assault or violence case, how can we gauge the rate of increase in sexual violence against women perpetuated by men, against women perpetuated by women, against men perpetuated by women, or against men perpetuated by men? These are four factors that must be taken into account; otherwise, the study of gender violence in the United States is moot.

The third problem we experienced was the documenting of trafficking victims who have been recovered in various municipalities. The trafficking of persons is something that is not widely recorded on official books. This is not necessarily intentional, as many women are mistaken for prostitutes and criminalized as such, which leads to a skew in the recording of prostitutes while the problem of trafficking is left ignored. In Los Angeles, a record of trafficking is maintained, but it is not recorded based on the number of victims. Rather, it is based on the number of trafficking cases that appear in court. Numbers of women can be grouped into one case, so instead of 30 instances of trafficking that 30 victims may represent, they are recorded as a single statistic. This is counteractive to our pursuit, as it minimizes the frequency of trafficking and significantly reduces the numbers of documented victims.

## **Recommendations**

We, at the Department on the Status of Women of the City and County of San Francisco, believe there are four essential steps that must be taken if the fight against human enslavement is to prevail. First, there must be an established trafficking victim-specific shelter created to serve women and children recovered from exploitative situations. Second, a broad public-awareness campaign needs to be developed and launched. Third, a comprehensive policy needs to be instituted either in the City of San Francisco or the State of California. There is no excuse for a lack of policy regarding the victims and survivors of human trafficking. Last, we believe regular round-table discussions should be held between non-governmental organizations, various city departments who have potential concern with the subject of trafficking (Department on the Status of Women, Department of Human Rights, Department on Children and Families, San Francisco Police Department, etc.), non-profits and for-profits. A collaboration of efforts is always stronger than a one-person team.

After much consideration, it is our recommendation to have a “victims of trafficking”-specific shelter in San Francisco. This shelter should be removed from highly-populated areas as well as areas of distinct affluence and other areas of potential danger to the survivors. This is for a variety of reasons:

1. Highly populated areas make for a less safe environment. There is a greater potential for new activity to be noticed. Take, for example, Saint Brigid Church on Van Ness Avenue. It is a massive church, unused, sitting on a central San Francisco highway. It is a location we considered briefly as a potential housing spot, as many of the people brought into the United States for exploitation subscribe to a Christian belief system of some denomination, which makes the church advantageous to their comfort level. However, because there are high rates of traffic directly outside the church due to daily commutes, new activity is likely to be noticed. This endangers the confidentiality and safety of the survivors housed. Traffickers, if not in custody, sometimes search for their victims in order to bring them back to captivity. It is of utmost importance to ensure the safety of the survivors.

2. Areas of affluence are not likely to be accepting of a shelter. There is a tendency in areas of affluence to want to preserve the sanctity of their neighborhood; this includes ensuring the blocking of “undesirable neighbors.” Real-estate in San Francisco is expensive and there is a wanton desire to maintain property values. A shelter may endanger the value and therefore would be duly rejected at a planning meeting. There is also issue with mandatory planning meetings, as announcing the purpose of the shelter to the public would jeopardize the security of the survivors.

3. Areas of distinct poverty or shelter embedded in areas of strong minority population are also poor choices when planning for a trafficking shelter. There is no way to know where the highest constituency of trafficked people is going to come from; therefore, we do not know how safe any communities are. Our greatest interest is to avoid putting the victims in *any* potentially harmful situations. As traffickers often appeal to members of their ethnic communities, it is possible that they will keep the victims somewhere within said community. Therefore, it is best if a shelter is not placed in a strongly ethnic neighborhood.

We recommend utilizing some of the abandoned buildings that exist on the Presidio Trust’s property. The Presidio would be an invaluable location to those rescued. There are a number of advantages to a shelter being in such an area:

1. It is quiet, removed from city sounds and life. It would provide a comfortable environment for recovery.

2. Many of the buildings are old army barracks. This means there are separate rooms in which the survivors could be housed. It has been found that victims of trafficking (specifically sex trafficking) do not, under any circumstances, like to be housed in a communal setting (i.e. living with multiple girls in one room). It is reminiscent of their captivity, and that is something we want to avoid.

3. “The Trust’s charge is to maintain the Presidio’s natural and historic resources to best serve national—not local—interests,” so says an online real-estate journal.<sup>vi</sup> The issue of sex trafficking is an international—and national—problem. Those who are rescued are not necessarily foreign nationals. There is a problem in the United States with domestic sex trafficking as well. Therefore, the shelter would serve the interests of the Presidio Trust.

4. Chrissy Field is accessible, providing for a relaxing place to take walks when the survivors are comfortable and safe.

There are a series of components that will need consideration beyond the location of the shelter, but we believe finding and securing a location to be of the highest importance, as it is the comfort and care of the survivors.

Although the examples provided pertain specifically to victims of sexual exploitation, it is of integral importance to note that the shelters *can* and *should* cater to all exploited victims of trafficking, whether it is sexual, domestic, factory, or field.

It is the second recommendation of the Department on the Status of Women to create a public awareness campaign. As seen with Operation Gilded Cage, which was executed July 1, 2005, the public often notices the activities of its neighbors. A number of the Korean women recovered were housed in an affluent apartment complex in San Francisco. The tenants in the complex complained to management about prostitution in the building. The management ignored the complaints. It is our assertion that if the tenants were more aware of human trafficking and the signs of sexual exploitation, they would have taken different steps, such as contacting the San Francisco Police Department in addition to complaining to management.

It has been noted that employees, managers, owners, and patrons of neighboring stores to massage parlors take notice of the clientele who frequent the establishments, as well as of the employees and various visible activities. Massage parlors are often considered havens for prostitution. Because prostitution is so “commonplace,” it has become an issue to report out of annoyance and inconvenience, as opposed to an issue to report out of concern. It is our belief that if the public were more aware of the horrific abuses and blatant slavery, as opposed to personal choice out of “immigrant need,” there would be more reports and higher concern for the welfare of the massage parlor employees.

It is our recommendation to work with audio media as well as visual. It is possible that some victims have access to the radio. We recommend public service announcements in a variety of languages be submitted to various radio stations for broadcast. Many victims of trafficking are told repeatedly that if they leave, they will be picked up and arrested by American police officers. It is important that we explore any avenue to get the

word to them that they will not face criminalization if they escape and come forward. Many victims are not bilingual, so broadcasting in the languages of those most often discovered to be trafficked in the Bay Area would be of strong benefit. We recommend submitting the broadcasts to stations that appeal to specific ethnic populations, in the hope that we may reach the victims through familiar avenues.

It is also important to have visual media available catering both to the literate and illiterate, people who read English and other monolingual peoples. We recommend various languages such as Korean, Thai, Russian, and Spanish.<sup>vii</sup> This can come in the forms of billboards, signs on the side of buses, signs lining the upper inside advertisement walls of local buses and electric transit, signs in Bay Area Rapid Transit stations and on BART trains, or posters in convenience stores. It can come in the form of flyers, handouts, or brochures. The important piece is that people become *aware*. Included in this media should be basic facts about trafficking: how many people are suspected to be brought into the United States each year, how many people are women, how many are children, how many are engaged in sexual slavery, how many for migrant and domestic labor, who tends to contribute to the exploitation, where the victims are typically kept and/or found, and what people can look out for. It is a lot of information, but it is all crucial information for the understanding of the public. Even a loose-leaf page or pamphlet in the *San Francisco Chronicle* or the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* would be beneficial, as it reaches so many people across the Bay Area.

It is important to reach out to victims, as well as the public, any way possible. If somehow word can reach the exploited that they do not need to fear the City the way they fear their captors, there may be a greater opportunity for escapes and first-hand reporting.

It is our third recommendation to create policy regarding the trafficking of human beings for exploitation, the protection of the survivors, and the prosecution of the traffickers, the buyers, and the “johns”. We would prefer to see this policy enacted State-wide, but it is the history of San Francisco to enact policy before many other jurisdictions. To initiate a strong and comprehensive anti-trafficking policy in San Francisco would add to the positive measures the City has taken in past years to initiate and maintain universal healthy living.

Included in this policy, there must be standards outlined for protective and rehabilitative services for survivors and strong prosecution standards to stand against the perpetrators of the abuses. It must be ensured that traffickers and johns do not have light sentences and do not have loopholes through which to escape. When writing policy, especially policy regarding sexual enslavement, it is important to keep in perspective that *every sexual act* the victim engaged in was an act of rape. This means that every person the victim was sold to took advantage of her body, and it was her “owner” who allowed the acts to take place. Those who enslave women experience massive economic gain. The punishment must be strong enough to keep the perpetrators from the temptation of multi-million dollar profits, which means the punishment has to be strong. The punishment absolutely must fit the crime.

Policy of police training should also be included. It should be written in collaborative effort with people who are directly involved in the handling of trafficking survivors because these are the people who hold the most valuable insight into what works and what does not work. This leads us to our final recommendation.

We believe that it would be advantageous for all departments and non-governmental associations, as well as for-profits and non-profits to convene in a round-table discussion to attack the issue of trafficking from a variety of angles. We believe that this is not a fight any department is prepared to battle alone, nor are NGOs and other non-governmental associations. There must be a collaborative effort so that needs which are already met are not repeated and needs that remain unattended to can gain attention and repair. The more minds that work together to fight against this trade, the more success we have in finding victims, saving lives, and incarcerating those who perpetuate the vicious cycles of sexual and psychological violence against the vulnerable and weak.

---

<sup>i</sup> Florida Statistical Analysis Center

<sup>ii</sup> President Bill Clinton, 1998. State Department, [http://www.usembassy.it/file2000\\_01/alia/a0012103.htm](http://www.usembassy.it/file2000_01/alia/a0012103.htm)

<sup>iii</sup> President George W. Bush, General Assembly of United Nations, September 2003

<sup>iv</sup> Those of Latino descent (South or Central America, Spain) have the choice to identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino.

<sup>v</sup> Baltimore Commission on the Status of Women

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.realestatejournal.com/regionalnews/west/20020510-grid.html>

<sup>vii</sup> These languages only serve as an example. There are many other languages that would be of advantage to print.