

# Fighting Sex Trafficking & Child Prostitution

According to State Department, estimates between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States annually.

In January of 2007, the U.S. Department of Justice named Las Vegas one of the top 20 most likely destinations for sex trafficking victims.

The United Nations says human trafficking is now the third largest criminal enterprise, behind only drugs and arms dealing.

The majority of the people trafficked are women, half of which are children. – U.S. Dept. of State.

300,000 children in the U.S. and 2.5 million worldwide are at risk every year for commercial sexual exploitation. – U.S. Dept. of Justice

Investigators and researchers estimate the average predator in the U.S. can make more than \$200,000 a year off one young girl.

# Why does sex trafficking exist?

Basic supply and demand economics:

An increase in demand brings about an increase of the product.

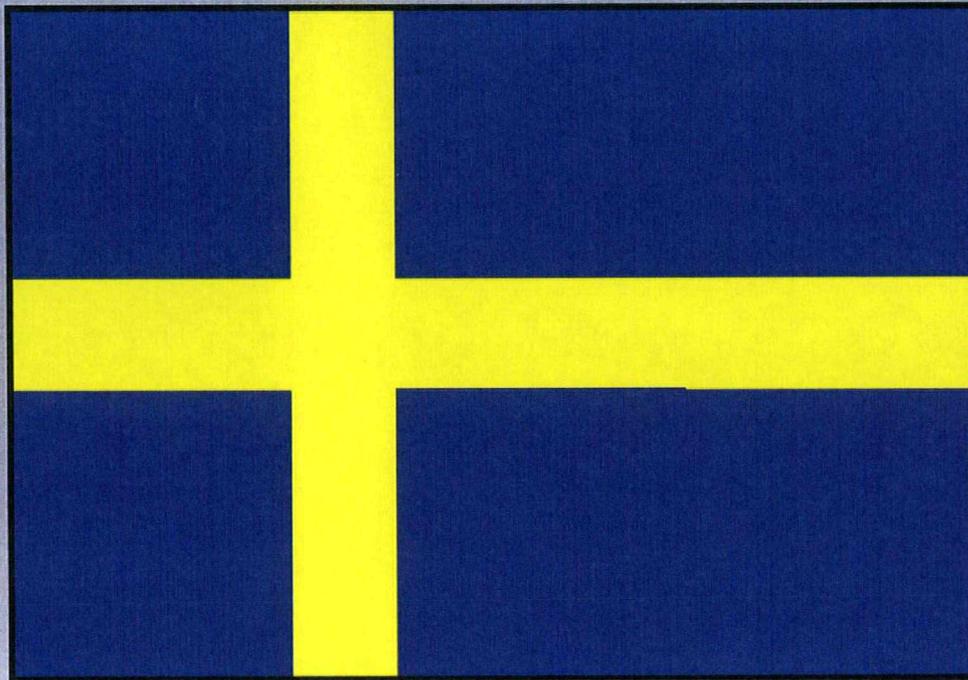
Where prostitution is accepted, there is a greater demand for human trafficking victims.

Sex trafficking would not exist without a demand for commercial sex.

**Supply**

**Demand**

**One country decided to  
test the theory...**



## Sweden Law of 1999

This Law is a fundamental part in combating the link between prostitution and human trafficking.

January 1, 1999, Sweden enacted a law that prohibits the purchase of sexual services. This Law criminalizes the buying of sex, but not the selling of sex.

-Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden (2003)

“No trade can take place without buyers and therefore we must not discuss trafficking in women and children without mentioning prostitution and the fact that men buy women and children for sexual purposes. Nor can we talk about prostitution without reference to trafficking in women and children. We will never succeed in combating trafficking unless we take a vigorous stand against prostitution at the same time. Prostitution is male violence against women and children and an unacceptable contradiction in a civilized modern society in which women and men are equal.”

# Results

Sweden estimates that in the first 4 years of the law, prostitution dropped 40%.

Johns have been reduced by 80%

Currently, only 200-400 people are being sex trafficked into Sweden annually compared 15,000 to 17,000 in neighboring Finland! (Finland has nearly half the population of Sweden)

# **Inside the Sex Industry**

## Just another job?

86% of the U.S. women in prostitution reported that they had been subjected to physical violence by buyers.

Up to 95% of women in prostitution are problematic drug users.

68% of women in prostitution meet the criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in the same range as torture victims and combat veterans undergoing treatment.

“What is rape to others is normal to us.”

## **A two year survey of 45 women in Nevada Legal Prostitution**

- 23% Self reported they were prostituted as a child.
- 47% Had pornography made of her in prostitution.
- 47% Had been homeless.
- 44% Verbally abused in prostitution.
- 27% Coerced or pressured into act of prostitution.
- 24% Admitted to being physically assaulted in prostitution.
- 81% Stated they want to escape prostitution.

**When I grow up I  
want to be a prostitute!**

How can it be that when a person is 17 their involvement in the sex industry is exploitive and illegal, but on the next day, their birthday, when they are 18, this becomes not just legal but legitimate? What process can occur in 24 hours that transforms something inherently exploitive into an issue of choice and consent?

An estimated 80 - 95% of children selling sex have a history of sexual abuse.

A Survivor Survey in Portland, Oregon showed that 70% were victims of incest as children and 85% had been physically abused.

Abuse within the family and/or community are significant precursors for many young people that were drawn into prostitution before the age of 18.

Nationally the average age that girls enter prostitution is 13-14.

Legalization increases child prostitution. This has been well documented in the Netherlands since brothel prostitution was legalized. Pimps, organized criminals, and especially johns flock to wherever a thriving prostitution industry exists, such as Las Vegas.

# Nevada

1,496 minors faced prostitution related charges in Las Vegas between 1994 - 2007.

Outreach workers in one organization identified over 400 prostituted children on the streets of Las Vegas in May of 2007 alone.

Between 2005-2007, 226 domestic trafficked children had been charged with prostitution or prostitution related charges. They were trafficked in from 28 different home states and 17% were 15 years of age or younger.

**What are others  
doing?**

## **Safe Harbor for Exploited Children Act**

Children as young as 11 and 12 are routinely charged and incarcerated for prostitution. The Safe Harbor Act wants to stop treating exploited children like criminals and provide them with services and safe houses – not jail cells.

The Safe Harbor Act recognizes that sexually exploited children need and deserve the protection of the Family Court.

The Court can require that sexually exploited children receive services. Specific cases with sexually exploited children would be assigned to work with specialized community-based programs designed to help children recover from the trauma of sexual exploitation and abuse.

**What we can do...**

# The Dept. of State Three P's ...Become the 4 P's

Prevention – Public Awareness; training law enforcement, judiciary professionals; eliminate the demand

Prosecution– Impose proper punishments

Protection – Rescue and Restore; Secure Safe houses with appropriate services

Partnership – Community Organizations



Nevada has one of the highest per capita juvenile incarceration rates in the nation. State and county costs for incarceration of Nevada juveniles continues to increase. Currently, the average cost to incarcerate a juvenile is \$84 a day.

Despite understanding that children are victims of exploitation, they are still arrested and placed in detention for an average of 17 days.

**\$84 / Day**

**17 Days**

**266 Kids**

**\$379, 848**

