

REMARKS

OF

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AT THE

ARRESTING DEMAND: A NATIONAL COLLOQUIUM

ON

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Thank you, Attorney General [Martha] Coakley. I'm very pleased to be here and excited to join this discussion of demand reduction in the unlawful commercial sex industry. I want to thank you for hosting us here in the great city of Boston – and for your leadership in the fight against sex trafficking.

I'd like to thank Ambassador [Swanee] Hunt and Lina Nealon for organizing this important colloquium, and for the tireless work their organizations are doing on behalf of the exploited and enslaved. They are to be applauded for their vision and commitment.

My thanks, as well, to Councilor [Ayanna] Pressley for welcoming us to Boston and for her support of this city's efforts to fight sex trafficking. And I want to acknowledge my fellow keynote speaker, Attorney General [Robert] McKenna – a true champion in the fight against human trafficking. He has demonstrated outstanding leadership on this issue as President of the National Association of Attorneys General. Our organizations have worked closely together to train investigators, prosecutors, and judges on trafficking issues – and I think we've helped moved the field forward together. I'm grateful for his partnership.

It's wonderful to be here. I'm a Massachusetts native – raised in Worcester, just about 40 miles west of here. I went to law school in Boston and lived in the city a number of years. I also held my first job as a prosecutor in the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office in Cambridge. I saw there what a tremendous impact our work in the justice system can have on the lives of those who are exploited and abused. As a young Assistant D.A., I learned important lessons about the dignity and worth of human life – and the difference we can all make – that I carry with me to this day.

These lessons run through the veins of all good Bostonians. We have a proud history of leading great causes. As we gather here to discuss modern-day issues of forced servitude and bondage, it's worth remembering the role this city played in ending an earlier form of slavery. William Lloyd Garrison published his great anti-slavery newspaper, *The Liberator*, just a couple of miles from here. Through it, he led a national movement that became a global crusade. In the first issue, he gave notice that abolition was not to be a cause for quiet or casual devotion. He said, "I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. I will not equivocate – I will not excuse – I will not retreat a single inch – and I will be heard."

Today, a century-and-a-half after he helped raise the nation's consciousness and secure the 13th Amendment to our Constitution, the need for champions against injustice remains great.

Sex trafficking is a big money-maker for criminals and a scourge to society. Traffickers callously seek to furnish their market with women, girls, and boys who have been cast out by society and whose options are few. In many cases, they are young

people – not even teenagers – who are looking for the home they’ve never had. What they find, instead, are betrayal, cruelty, and abuse. And sadly, too often our systems of support and justice have offered no quarter.

Years ago, as U.S. Attorney in Washington, D.C., my office’s human trafficking task force pursued a case involving a network of distributors that trafficked girls up and down I-95. We were beginning to make headway in the case, thanks in great part to a Metropolitan Police Department officer who formed a bond of trust with a juvenile victim. This victim eventually agreed to break away and testify. Unfortunately, the case dragged on – and before we could get to trial, she changed her mind and tried to return. Sadly, we had to lock her up as a material witness. We were eventually able to get to trial and win the case, but not before re-traumatizing this poor girl.

Regrettably, that was the reality of how investigators and prosecutors handled sex trafficking cases in those days. And quite frankly, it’s how some cases are handled even today.

We have much work to do – in raising awareness, in changing attitudes, and in meeting the needs of those who are exploited. But the good news is we are making progress.

I’m proud that the Department of Justice and my agency – the Office of Justice Programs – have been part of this movement forward. In an era of diminishing federal dollars, we are directing substantial resources to fighting human trafficking. Last year, we made more than \$9 million available to bolster anti-human trafficking efforts. Our Bureau of Justice Assistance and Office for Victims of Crime now support 28 task forces dedicated to investigating trafficking crimes and providing culturally competent victim services.

In a two-and-half year period ending in June 2010, these task forces investigated more than 2,500 incidents of human trafficking and arrested 144 suspected traffickers. We are reviewing another round of applications for funding now and will support additional task forces this year.

We also make available a number of training and technical assistance resources. We recently supported a third pilot training for state prosecutors in conjunction with the National Association of Attorneys General. And we held a Webcast in December that drew more than 80 state and local judges.

Our Bureau of Justice Assistance is funding a series of three-day trainings on advanced investigation techniques. And after holding several regional trainings, our Office for Victims of Crime is planning a national forum for law enforcement and victim service providers this summer.

We've also developed an excellent resource called the Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force Strategy and Operations e-Guide. This guide offers direction on forming and strengthening task forces and provides lessons learned from current task forces, as well as a host of other tools for fighting human trafficking in your community.

The Justice Department's efforts to combat trafficking is by no means limited to the work we're doing in the Office of Justice Programs. Fighting trafficking crimes is a priority of the Obama Administration and of this Department of Justice.

Last year, the Attorney General launched a Department-wide Human Trafficking Enhanced Enforcement Initiative. And last week, he announced his plans to designate an anti-human trafficking coordinator to oversee all Justice activities in this area. This will allow us to be even more effective in our efforts to combat these crimes and reach victims.

Led by the Civil Rights Division – and strengthened by other components – the Department of Justice has achieved substantial increases in human trafficking prosecutions and charged a record number of defendants. In one such case in Virginia, the Department secured a life sentence against a violent gang member who coerced a 12-year-old runaway into prostitution, regularly plied her with alcohol and drugs, and forced her to have sex with multiple men every day.

It's significant – for all of us in this room – that more than 40 percent of all human trafficking incidents opened for investigation by the Department were for sexual trafficking of a child. And more than 80 percent of these were identified as U.S. citizens. Human trafficking – and particularly sex trafficking – is not just a spillover of corrupt regimes where the rule of law holds little sway. It's happening right here under our noses. As the Attorney General said, this "is not just a global problem – it's a national crisis."

My agency has mobilized to support those who are forced into prostitution. Our Office for Victims of Crime and our Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention are funding several organizations that work to serve young victims of commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking.

Rachel Lloyd's GEMS program in New York City – as you just heard – provides a range of services, from counseling, housing, and legal aid, to education and employment services. GEMS is designed not only to get these young people out of the commercial sex industry, but to empower them to become mentors and leaders and to reach their full potential. Rachel has said that many of these girls "cannot envision a future. . . GEMS works to give them their future back."

Just a couple of weeks ago – during National Crime Victims' Rights Week – the Attorney General recognized Rachel and her team with the National Crime Victim

Service Award, the highest national award for service to crime victims. And I'm so pleased that we're supporting GEMS' efforts by funding the development of a guide – informed by survivors – for serving girls and women who are commercially exploited and domestically trafficked.

Reaching these victims and helping them reclaim hope is vital, but it's not enough. For too long, our approach to the unlawful commercial sex industry has been focused on the traffickers who occupy the supply side of the equation. We need to adjust our approach and look at the demand side, as well. I'm encouraged by organizations like Demand Abolition and by the enlightened advocates and professionals at this colloquium who are leading us in this direction. I'm also heartened by the aggressive approaches we're seeing in communities across the nation – including right here in Boston, where police, under Commissioner Ed Davis, have been successful in arresting would-be buyers.

And I'm pleased to see a growing interest in programs that specifically target the demand-side of the industry. Johns schools, in particular, have gained traction in cities across the country. They've provided an effective tool for preventing future offending. Our National Institute of Justice funded a study of San Francisco's First Offender Prostitution Program – one of the nation's first Johns schools. The study found a 40 percent reduction in recidivism among participants. What's more, it found that these programs pay for themselves – offenders foot the bill at no expense to taxpayers. In fact, the San Francisco program has generated \$1 million in revenue that is being used to pay for programs to help former prostitutes.

I'm pleased we're supporting this work through our partners at the organization Standing Against Global Exploitation, or SAGE. I'm sure many of you know about SAGE and their collaboration with the San Francisco District Attorney's Office on the First Offender program. Part of their work involves helping girls and women exit the commercial sex trade. Since late 2009, our Office for Victims of Crime has helped support therapeutic and rehabilitative services to minor victims who come through this program.

By focusing our resources on demand reduction efforts like Johns schools, early evidence shows we can be more effective. Research done by Michael Shively – under funding from my agency – has found that demand-focused and other comprehensive approaches result in substantial reductions in prostitution and sex trafficking markets.

By no means does this suggest we curtail our efforts to go after distributors, or let up on our outreach to victims. What it tells us is that we need to approach sex trafficking holistically and make sure we're attacking the root of the problem.

But what are these approaches that seem to be working so well? We know Johns schools can bring real results, but what about other methods?

Our National Institute of Justice is working to give us a better understanding of these practices. You'll hear from Michael Shively later about a new report he's authored under an NIJ grant that provides a catalogue of demand reduction practices compiled from jurisdictions across the country. When we started surveying the field, we expected maybe a couple hundred responses. The final report describes more than 800 programs – everything from Web stings and camera surveillance to billboard ads and the publication of names and photos.

The catalogue is exhaustive – and it gives a terrific scan of the landscape in demand reduction. As a companion to the report, we'll be launching a Web site that law enforcement, victim services, and other organizations can access for information about these programs. Our hope is that this will be a tool to advance these efforts in communities across the country. And I want to add that Michael's organization, Abt Associates, has agreed to maintain the site. We're grateful for their partnership in this effort.

Our base of knowledge about sex trafficking is growing. So is our understanding of what works to fight it. For too long, our approach to fighting unlawful commercial sex has looked past the Johns whose demand perpetuates the industry and focused on those who are often coerced into providing services.

Our nation is beginning to open its eyes to this injustice. Activists, survivors, and forward-thinking professionals like all of you have helped us see our errors and straighten our path. You've pointed us forward. Now, we can truly begin – in earnest – the work to end sex trafficking in our country. Thank you.

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