

Stop Trafficking !

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter



Awareness

Advocacy

Action

September 2006 Vol. 4 No. 9

This issue highlights the Sisters of Mercy International Justice Network and their ongoing efforts to stem human trafficking. There is also information about two state's anti-trafficking efforts.

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The Pimps' Friends in Albany

A study a couple of years ago found that the State Legislature in New York was the most dysfunctional in America. The study, conducted by the *Brennan Center for Justice* at the New York University School of Law, described a gridlocked legislative process that accomplished remarkably little.

Here's an example of the dysfunction in action.

Early last year a Democratic assemblyman from the Bronx, Jeffrey Dinowitz, introduced a bill (A1898-b) to fight sex trafficking. It had overwhelming support in the Assembly, which is not surprising. Other than the johns and the pimps, who's out there championing forced prostitution?

Mr. Dinowitz hoped, through his legislation, to establish two new crimes in New York: trafficking a person for sexual servitude and trafficking a person for labor servitude.

Sex trafficking — the coercing of women and girls into the sex trade — is no small problem in New York and across the U.S. Attempts to specify the number of trafficking victims have proved unreliable. But federal officials believe many thousands of women and girls are forced into prostitution each year, and thousands more are put to work against their will in massage parlors, strip clubs and other corners of the sex-for-money industry.

Some victims are literally held under lock and key as sex slaves. Others are threatened with violence if they don't

cooperate, or are told that their relatives will be harmed. Some are obliged to work to pay off financial "*obligations*." It is common for immigrants to be forced into prostitution after being lured to the U.S. with false promises of legitimate work. They have their passports confiscated and their money stolen, and are left at the mercy of pimps and madams.

Mr. Dinowitz's bill was a modest attempt to fight this unconscionable exploitation of vulnerable women and girls. It would have made trafficking a Class C felony, with penalties ranging from probation for a first-time offender to a maximum of 15 years in prison. It would have modestly raised the penalties for patronizing prostitutes, making it easier to jail chronic offenders. And it would have addressed the problem of sex tourism, in which tour companies arrange trips from the U.S. to foreign countries so the tourists — invariably men — can have sex with foreign prostitutes, many of whom have been forced into the sex trade, and some of whom are children.

The bill hit a few roadblocks. The Assembly speaker, Sheldon Silver, and others felt that some of the bill's language was too broad. The speaker, his staffers and other interested parties went to work on it, reworking the language and narrowing the bill's focus.

But they did more than add preci-

NY Law cont. pg. 2

Illinois Actively Counters Human Trafficking

Illinois' new *Trafficking of Persons and Involuntary Servitude Act* (HB1469), enacted by Gov. Blagojevich in January 2006, defines and establishes penalties for the offenses of involuntary servitude, sexual servitude of a minor and human trafficking for forced labor and services. Forcing any person into servitude will range from a Class 4 to a Class X felony if kidnapping or injury is involved.



The law allows for restitution to pay back a victim for forced labor and it authorizes the IL Attorney General to seize

an offender's assets upon conviction. The proceeds from the forfeited assets will in turn be distributed to the units of local and state law enforcement that conduct the investigations and to a fund dedicated to helping victims.

The law allows the IL Department of Human Services (IDHS) to provide emergency victim services, and applies to all instances of human trafficking, sexual servitude of a minor, or domestic servitude, whether a victim is a US citizen or not. The new act allows law enforcement officials in the state of Illinois to certify to the federal government that a person is a victim of

IL Effort cont. pg. 2



Awareness

IL Effort *cont. from pg. 1*

human trafficking, making it easier for potential victims to access services.

IDHS produced the largest human trafficking awareness training to date in November 2005. A two-hour program was broadcast via satellite across the state, reaching over 300 social service and healthcare workers. Other states were also able to access the training and a video recording was posted online for people to view free of charge. The *IL Rescue and Restore campaign* also hosted an event at the Chicago Police Department in November where more than 90 community and faith-based representatives learned about human trafficking.

In April 2006 IDHS joined the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and more than 100 partners statewide in the *Illinois Rescue and Restore Human Trafficking Outreach Day* to raise awareness of the problem of human trafficking and to help rescue victims in Illinois. IDHS Secretary Carol L. Adams, Ph.D. and approximately 130 volunteer teams from every corner of the state canvassed neighborhoods and hung over 13,000 posters advertising the national human trafficking hotline: 1-888-3737-888.

"Human trafficking is often a hidden problem, so reaching out to trafficking victims is important because the victims do not often know that help is available," said Adams. *"Wherever they can be found, we want to be there with hotline information and support for victims of this terrible crime."*

Posters were displayed across the state through partners that included

the IL Department of Transportation, Metra, Chicago Police Department, IL State Police, and many local community and faith-based social service agencies. Volunteers targeted locations where a potential victim of trafficking or a first responder might see the message, such as in highway rest stops, libraries, gas stations, health clinics, restaurants, laundromats, Chicago Transit Authority trains, and retail stores. Various types of posters have been produced in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese.

The *IL Rescue and Restore* campaign is a coalition comprised of local agencies, state agencies, law enforcement and the faith community to raise awareness of the problem. Outreach is one of the five statewide goals for the *Illinois Rescue and Restore Coalition*, along with training first responders, prosecuting offenders, coordinating services for victims, and collecting data on human trafficking.

To join the *Illinois Rescue and Restore Campaign*, visit: www.dhs.state.il.us/projects/initiatives/trafficking.



NY Law *cont. from pg. 1*

sion to the language of the bill. They watered the bill down.

Although the speaker and members of his staff insisted that the crimes covered by the bill were "serious felonies," they lowered the crime of trafficking to a Class D felony, making it much easier for convicted sex traffickers to escape prison time altogether.

Additional penalties against johns were scrapped, as was any reference to sex tourism. And so on.

The bill then passed the Assembly and was sent over to the Senate.

But the Republican-controlled Senate had its own anti-trafficking measure and touted it with bombastic language. The sponsor of the Senate bill, Frank Padavan of Queens, declared that "human trafficking is a despicable form of modern slavery, and it is unthinkable that it would be allowed to flourish in our democracy."

The Padavan bill would have made sex trafficking a Class C felony, but it equated sexual servitude with labor servitude in a way that suggested — perhaps inadvertently — that being a prostitute was just another job, like farm work, or garment-making. Unlike the Dinowitz bill, it offered no services to the victims of trafficking. And it did not allow women charged with prostitution to use the fact that they had been trafficked as a defense.

Neither house of the Legislature gave the other house's bill serious consideration. Last week the Assembly and the Senate adjourned without making any genuine attempt to actually enact a law against sex trafficking. It was a big win for the pimps and the madams.

The state's effort to combat trafficking in New York could hardly have been more ineffective. The Legislature's status as the most dysfunctional in the nation seems secure.

Source: BOB HERBERT, Op-Ed Columnist, July 6, 2006 *New York Times* <http://select.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=F30B13FC38540C758CDDAE0894DE404482>

Editor's Note: 28 religious congregations downstate joined other congregations upstate in trying to get A1898-b passed.

Mary Heyser, RSHM.



Advocacy

Mercy International Justice Network: Advocacy on Behalf of Those Exploited by Human Traffickers

The editor thanks the sponsoring MIJN for sharing with readers of *Stop Trafficking* how its members act against human trafficking.

The Mercy International Justice Network (MIJN), representing Sisters of Mercy in 45 countries, has been a sponsor of the STOP TRAFFICKING Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter for over two years. This international network works in the following five regions — the Asia Pacific, South and Cent. America and the Caribbean, Africa, Europe and North America.

MIJN has recently joined efforts with JOLT (*Justice Organizers, Leadership and Treasurers — a Catholic Coalition for Responsible Investment*) to effect justice action related to human trafficking. JOLT is asking the manufacturers of women's feminine products to print the Human Trafficking HOT LINE phone number on the inside of the packaging of their products. Action for this project has been communicated to thousands of sisters, associates and co-ministers around the world, who receive e-mail updates periodically. More information can be found on the Mercy World web site (see below).

Trafficking of Women and Children in the Asian Pacific

“Several MIJN actions have taken place over the last month on trafficking. In many countries across the world the groups of religious leaders have opted to set up working parties to address the injustice done especially to women through trafficking for sex.”

“For example, the Australian Leaders of Religious Orders' working party for trafficking in Melbourne is concerned about Australia's current visa laws for trafficked persons. Visas and support services are limited to trafficked women who are able to assist law enforcing and prosecuting processes.

This approach does not acknowledge the human rights of all trafficked persons, who need protection and assistance. Furthermore, it (the law) may be ineffective because it does not provide them with the long term security they need to enable them to risk cooperating with the law enforcement and criminal justice system.”

Helen Owens RSM, MIJN Asia Pacific, and Carole McDonald, Melbourne Australia

Australian Religious Congregations Send Report to UN

The Australian Sisters of Mercy Institute's Specific Issues Committee on Women and Poverty prepared a resource on trafficking. This gives facts and figures on why the issue of trafficking should be a concern to Sisters of Mercy. Facts include:

- Victims of trafficking are subject to gross human rights violations, including torture, forced abortions, starvation and threats (torture or murder of family members).
- Victims of trafficking are later used to traffic other women and children. (www.worldrevolution.org).

The readers of this resource are invited to read the Australian NGO *Shadow Report* on the situation of trafficked women within Australia

Twenty-three religious congregations and organizations sent the Report to the *Convention for the Eradication of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) Committee at the United Nations on January 23, 2006. The Sisters of Mercy were one of these groups. The report made recommendations to the Australian Government, including the following:

- That the existing trafficking visa framework be reformed.
- That trafficking victims be eligible for visas on the basis of their status as a victim of trafficking, their safety needs and their need for support, regardless of their involvement in the criminal justice system.
- That, upon entering the victim support program, a person receive comprehensive legal advice and access to a health care program.
- That the Australian Government develop the victim support program in Australia to provide supported accommodation and care for all trafficking survivors, and that consideration be given to the resourcing of other providers (NGOs and religious groups).





Advocacy

Suggestions for action by Australian Mercies:

- Obtain a copy of the Shadow Report, read it, and pass it on.
- Find out about CEDAW on the Internet.
- Support and join networks that address social problems, particularly in regard to trafficking.
- Become involved in an organization trying to combat trafficking (e.g. the working parties on trafficking from Australian Catholic Leaders of Religious Institutes (ACLRI).
- Support politicians who show empathy towards women being trafficked.

Trafficking of Women and Girls

(Excerpt from the MIJN Asia Pacific Newsletter July 2006)

What follows is a section from an article from the Sydney Sun Herald of July 6, 2006. The Sisters featured were engaged by the Australian Catholic Leaders of Religious Institutes (ACLRI) to give input at their recent Annual Conference in Adelaide. Some Mercy Sisters attended a rally on trafficking at which Louise Cleary spoke.

“Abused and powerless, the victims of sex slavery in Australia have had nowhere to turn for help. Now,” writes Erin O’Dwyer, *“a dedicated network of nuns are defying the lucrative trafficking industry and reaching out.”*

It began over lunch in a suburban shopping center, where two middle-aged women with furrowed brows were worrying over some girls who were in trouble. To passers-by, the women would have seemed unremarkable. Munching their sandwiches and chatting away, they could have been someone’s wife or mother.

In fact, they were no such thing. Sisters Pauline Coll and Louise Cleary are devout Catholics, who live by vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. And the focus of their conversation was village girls from South-East Asia, who had been sold into sex slavery in Australia.

“Their suffering has pushed someone like me, even at a distance, into saying this is evil,” Pauline Coll says.

“It’s only people in the First World who have the power to work towards changing something for people who don’t have any power.”

“What it is not,” warns Coll, *“is a debate about morality and prostitution. Some people see these women just as prostitutes,”* says Coll, herself a Good Samaritan sister.

“We need to keep saying it’s not about prostitution; it’s not about prostitution. It’s about slavery and that’s the end of the sentence. You remove a person’s basic right to be free and it becomes a human rights issue.”

People-trafficking looms large on the international human rights radar. The International Labor Organization estimates that more than 12 million people are enslaved at any one time. That includes people forced to work in sweatshops, in dangerous mines, or to beg on streets. It includes those forced to fight in armies, sell their organs or smuggle drugs. But it’s the sale of women into sexual servitude that grabs headlines. Europol believes the industry is worth several billion dollars a year.

This was the scene when Pauline Coll and Louise Cleary held their shopping mall meeting. The meeting was in response to a global network of nuns - the International Union of Superiors General - who had made a call for their members to stamp out trafficking of women and children. And so when Coll and Cleary organized grass roots meetings and letter-writing campaigns, they found a willing coalition of religious brothers and sisters.

Twelve months on, the sisters have mobilized nuns from 10 orders around Australia into the Religious Congregations Anti-Trafficking Working Group. Its sole aim is to sabotage the multinational trafficking industry, which is worth billions each year.

“Global poverty is the driver that creates victims,” Cleary says via email. *“I have seen this first-hand in Third World countries I have visited. Young women have few rights and are preyed upon to provide sexual services in atrocious conditions. The fact that some of these defenseless women are trafficked to Australia is all the more appalling.”* Around the country countless other nuns are also doing their share. Those involved include the Sisters of Charity, Good Shepherds, Sisters of Mercy, Presentation Sisters, and the Marists. Some have expertise in counselling, others in teaching English. One order of nuns in Melbourne has been providing emergency accommodations.

The collective is still embryonic yet it is breaking new ground.”

(Shared by Helen Owens RSM)



MIJN Geographical Area Representatives: (l. to r.) Angela Hartigan (Africa), Deborah Watson (South and Central America), Dale Jarvis (North America), Helen Owens (Asia-Pacific), and Sheila O’Gorman (Europe).



Advocacy

Ireland

In Ireland, the Sisters of Mercy, being part of an inter-congregational *ad hoc* working group, have put together a flyer addressing “*Trafficking of People: Modern Day Slavery.*”

This working group, operating under the umbrella of both CORI (Conference of Religious of Ireland) and IMU (Irish Missionary Union), have come together because of a common vision:

“*Our Vision is that of a world in which all persons are respected, valued and given the dignity which is theirs by right; a world where no one seeks to exploit or to enslave another for the purpose of sexual gratification or financial gain.*”

Their flyer gives information on what human trafficking involves and how people can get involved to make a difference. A list of published resources on modern day trafficking is included.

The Irish Province of the Sisters of Mercy in the U.S. undertook the following:

- Sisters receive monthly MIJN reports for North America, as well as the quarterly justice newsletter, “*Mercy Across the Miles*”, and use various web sites on trafficking for their education.
- Sisters attended a workshop offered by Sr. Jean Schafer in Los Angeles, CA and are alerted when any type of television program in relation to Human Trafficking is being aired.
- Sisters have spoken to groups in their parishes about the trafficking situation in the U.S.

Susan DeGuede RSM, liaison with MIJN for the Irish Province Sisters of Mercy U.S.

MIJN in North America

The Mercy International Justice Network in North America (The Irish Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, USA Province; The Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland and the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas) have together taken on the issue of human trafficking as a primary focus. The Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas have taken a Corporate Stance against Human Trafficking.

The West/MidWest Community of Mercys featured articles on human trafficking in their community publication, *Tidings*.

As partners with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ *Rescue and Restore Campaign*, they distributed 500 informative posters throughout the Chicago area. The posters were printed in many languages and included the hotline help number. This enabled the Mercys to discuss the human trafficking with the many businesses and churches they contacted.

A “traveling team” spoke on the issue throughout the Region. They showed a U.S. Dept. HHS-produced DVD to Sisters and Associates in Milwaukee, WI and Aurora, IL. That group became involved, inviting the team to make two presentations to the Emergency Room staff at Provena Mercy Hospital, to the staff and clients at Hesed House, to the Kane County Health department, and to the parish nurse program of Provena Mercy Hospital.

St. Xavier University became involved through the efforts of the Justice Committee. After a presentation to campus ministry, some students volunteered to help distribute posters.

Currently the Justice Committee is involved in the letter writing campaign of JOLT, contacting manufacturers of feminine hygiene products (see *Stop Trafficking*, July 2006). We have distributed the information to our Justice Committee, our hotline network, and to the whole region through ‘*News You Can Use*’. RSM Sisters Patricia Murphy and JoAnn Persch, Chicago, IL.

The Pittsburgh Regional Community is a member of the Tri-diocesan Sisters Leadership Conference Committee of Human Trafficking. We call ourselves PATH (*People Against Trafficking Humans*). Our focus is on education. For the three years we have sponsored a series of talks by different individuals including Laura Lederer from the State Department; a local police commander, a district attorney; Mary Ellen Dougherty SSND of the USCCB/MRS, and Maria Riley OP.

Our focus is on the education of our Sisters, Associates and the general public regarding the issue and what can be done about it. We are a member of U.S. Dept. HHS *Rescue and Restore Campaign* and have hosted informational tables at the local *Catholic Schools Education Conference* and the *Council of Catholic Women’s Conference*. In July 2007, we will have a table and display at the *Pax Christi National Assembly*.

Dr. Mary Burke Ph.D., Associate Professor at Carlow University in Pittsburg, is working with graduate students on this issue. She has given many talks in this area and is planning to take graduate students to Costa Rica, a trafficking ‘*sending country*’. She is also involved with a group addressing the need for safe places for victims of human trafficking.

RSM Sister Jean Murin, member of the Pittsburgh Regional Community, and Justice Coordinator for Mercy Communities of Pittsburg, Erie, Rochester and Buffalo.

Toll-Free Hotline:
(Trafficking Information
and Referral)
1.888.3737.888



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MIJN in North America cont.

Members of *MIJN* and the *Institute of the Americas Justice Team* are partners with the *USCCB Migration and Refugee Services* and work with the Trafficking Coalition convened by the USCCB. They also collaborate with local Bishops regarding the importance of education about the issue of modern-day slavery.

Dale Jarvis RSM, Chair of the Mercy International Justice Network and North American focal point person.

Sisters of Mercy in both Burlington and Auburn CA belong to a coalition of women's religious congregations that is moving ahead in terms of collaborative work to address human trafficking. The hope is to offer temporary housing/safe housing. Appropriate sites are being investigated. We would move ahead once a site is found. At least seven or eight congregations are pledging to contribute monetarily and to discern how staffing might be done.

We have also begun to develop relationships with local legal and non-profit agencies that are working directly with the victims, mostly to learn about the issue and develop some ideas as to how we may become more involved directly or indirectly. We feel that our collaborative effort as women religious will eventually lead to great works! *Sister Sherry Dolan RSM, Burlington, CA.*

The **Collaborative Center for Justice** (<http://www.ccfj.org>) has been working human trafficking in conjunction with other communities and agencies for the last two years.

The *Center Staff* (Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of St. Joseph) attended the 2004 and 2005 USCCB-sponsored Human Trafficking meetings held in Baltimore.

Staff also participated in a study/work group at the Connecticut Legislature. A Task Force from the *Center* worked on CT legislation, which was passed this year (2006).

In September 2005 the *Center* sponsored a two-day symposium on Human Trafficking. The planning committee was collaborative: agencies, religious communities and interfaith groups. Over 200 participants attended the symposium (see *Stop Trafficking* September 2005). The *Center* continues efforts at education.

The *Center* staff is working in collaboration with the *International Institute*, an agency in Bridgeport CT that works with victims of trafficking. Twenty-five members from various congregations, interested in "safe housing," have participated in three meetings on the topic. Housing is a complicated issue. Collaborative networking to address how best to help the victims is essential and ongoing.

Sister Mary Alice Synkewecz RSM, Northeast Community, Connecticut.

Our trafficking efforts in the **Mercy Northeast Community** are focused mainly on the New York State legislature. We have been involved in grassroots organizing to get important legislation passed. It did not pass because the State budget did not have funding for it. We are hopeful for autumn 2006, however.

There is a very good billboard (not our doing) up on an Interstate coming into Albany which is great.

We, Sisters of the Holy Names, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and Sisters of Mercy co-sponsored a day with Leslie Wolff in December 2005. We have an email action alert list of over 100 names. We have recently started calling ourselves the *Religious Coalition Against Human Trafficking of the Capitol District*. We are in the process of trying to work with a larger group from downstate - the NY City area. We have had no opportunities for direct service.

Sister Kathleen Pritty RSM, Albany NY, Northeast Community.

The **North Carolina Mercy Regional Community** hosted a day-long Trafficking Workshop in August 2006.

Speakers were Mary Ellen Dougherty SSND, Coordinator of Outreach and Education for the USCCB/MRS anti-trafficking program and Ann Rodriquez, President of Immigration Right Advocacy Center for the Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking.

Sister Angela Perez RSM

The **MidAtlantic Community** is collaborating with the *Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility* (ICCR). ICCR is picking up human trafficking as part of its human rights work. The Mercy Investment Program is interested in pursuing this. ICCR has had success working with a major hotel chain and the focus will be on engagement of the hotel and tourist industries.

Sister Patricia Wolf RSM,



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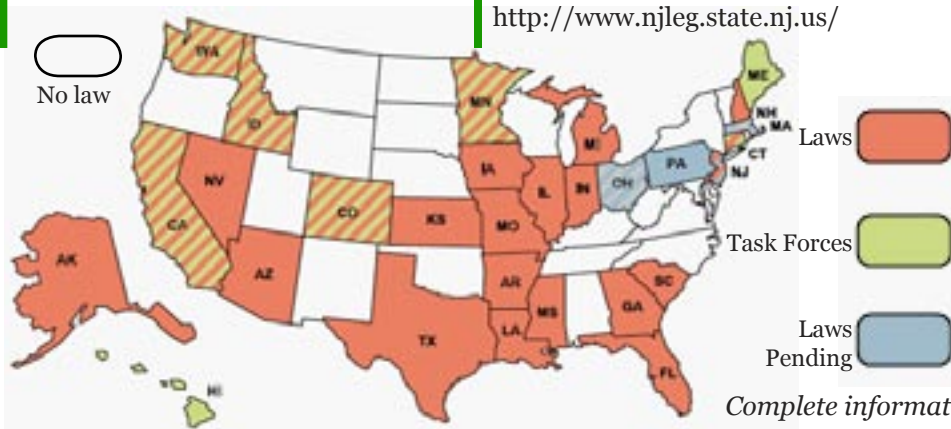
If you wish to follow the legislation for any particular state, refer to the web site addresses below.

Informative Web Sites:
Links to State Legislatures

- ALABAMA**
<http://www.legislature.state.al.us/>
- ALASKA**
www.legis.state.ak.us/
- ARIZONA**
<http://www.azleg.state.az.us/>
- ARKANSAS**
<http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/>
- CALIFORNIA**
<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/>
- COLORADO**
<http://www.leg.state.co.us/>
- CONNECTICUT**
<http://www.cga.ct.gov/>
- DELAWARE**
<http://www.legis.state.de.us/Legislature.nsf/?Opendatabase>
- DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**
<http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/>
- FLORIDA**
www.leg.state.fl.us/
- GEORGIA**
<http://www.legis.state.ga.us/>
- HAWAII**
<http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/>
- IDAHO**
<http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/>
- ILLINOIS**
<http://www.ilga.gov/>
- INDIANA**
<http://www.in.gov/legislative/>

- IOWA**
<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/>
- KANSAS**
<http://www.kslegislature.org/legsrv-portal/index.do>
- KENTUCKY**
<http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/home.htm>
- LOUISIANA**
<http://www.legis.state.la.us/>
- MAINE**
<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/>
- MARYLAND**
<http://mlis.state.md.us/>
- MASSACHUSETTS**
<http://www.mass.gov/legis/legis.htm>
- MICHIGAN**
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/>
- MINNESOTA**
<http://www.leg.state.mn.us/>
- MISSISSIPPI**
<http://www.ls.state.ms.us/>
- MISSOURI**
<http://www.moga.state.mo.us/>
- MONTANA**
<http://leg.state.mt.ucss/default.asp>
- NEBRASKA**
<http://www.unicam.state.ne.us/>
- NEVADA**
<http://www.leg.state.nv.us/>
- NEW HAMPSHIRE**
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/ie/>
- NEW JERSEY**
<http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>

- NEW MEXICO**
<http://legis.state.nm.us/lcs/default.asp>
- NEW YORK**
<http://assembly.state.ny.us/>
- NORTH CAROLINA**
<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/homePage.pl>
- NORTH DAKOTA**
<http://www.legis.nd.gov/>
- OHIO**
<http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/>
- OKLAHOMA**
<http://www.lsb.state.ok.us/>
- OREGON**
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/search-meas.html>
- PENNSYLVANIA**
<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/>
- RHODE ISLAND**
<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/>
- SOUTH CAROLINA**
<http://www.scstatehouse.net/>
- SOUTH DAKOTA**
<http://legis.state.sd.us/index.cfm>
- TENNESSEE**
<http://www.legislature.state.tn.us/>
- TEXAS**
<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>
- UTAH**
<http://www.le.state.ut.us/>
- VERMONT**
<http://www.leg.state.vt.us/>
- VIRGINIA**
<http://legis.state.va.us/>
- WASHINGTON**
<http://www1.leg.wa.gov/legislature>
- WEST VIRGINIA**
<http://www.legis.state.wv.us/>
- WISCONSIN**
<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/>
- WYOMING**
<http://legisweb.state.wy.us/>



Complete information available at the Polaris Project site.



Action

First Annual International Weekend of Prayer and Fasting for Victims of Trafficking September 29 - October 2, 2006

Public Hearings on Issues Affecting CA Women and Girls

The California Commission on the Status of Women, a state agency established in 1965, is mandated to study, recommend and advise the Governor and the Legislature on inequities in laws, practices and conditions that affect women.

The Commission will hold public hearings on issues facing California women and girls. Hearings will be made up ENTIRELY of testimony from individuals and organizations bringing their comments and recommendations to the Commission.

Information from the hearings will help determine the Commission's legislative agenda, and recommendations for administrative action, the state budget, and studies on issues impacting women and girls.

Issues for testimony include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment, reproductive freedom, racial equality, child support, childcare, human trafficking, access to health care, child custody, women in prison, economic security, divorce, Title IX, housing, education, pay equity, stalking, sexual assault, employment discrimination, women in politics, teen dating violence, domestic violence, hate crimes, athletic equity, disability, CalWORKs, CEDAW & teen pregnancy.

- September 20, 2006 - Los Angeles
- September 28, 2006 - Fresno
- October 19, 2006 - Sacramento
- Testimony may be written, oral, or both and should address issues impacting women. It should include recommendations for action that the State of California could take.
- Oral testimony should be limited to no more than 5 minutes.

CA Hearings cont. col.3



Register on-line at: <http://www.salvationarmyusa.org/trafficking>.

The Salvation Army is inviting people to join in solidarity on behalf of those exploited through human trafficking.

They wrote, "Our vision is for Christians to organize one day in the workplace and one Sunday to focus prayer and intercession on behalf of people who are trafficked, enslaved and exploited."

Petition God to change things, to free the captives, to end these evils, and to guide and empower Christians to serve, to prevent, to rescue and to restore."

Corporate Stance

Religious congregations and collaborators that have taken a corporate stance against human trafficking:

- o Dominicans of Mission San Jose, CA
- o Dominicans of Oxford, MI
- o Dominicans of San Rafael, CA
- o Dominicans of Sparkhill, NY
- o Dominicans of Springfield, IL
- o Dominican Sisters and Associates of St. Mary of the Springs, Columbus, OH
- o International Congregation of Notre Dame
- o Loretto Justice and Peace Network
- o Loretto Women's Network
- o Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Stella Maris Prov. NY)
- o Religious of the Good Shepherd
- o School Sisters of Notre Dame
- o Sisters of the Divine Savior
- o Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary
- o Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
- o Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry
- o Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia
- o Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, CA

CA Hearings cont.

- Sign-Up Forms may be obtained at: www.women.ca.gov or contact the Commission office at 916-445-3173 or by email at: info@women.ca.gov.

Stop Trafficking! is dedicated exclusively to fostering an exchange of information among religious congregations, their friends and collaborating organizations, working to eliminate all forms of trafficking of human beings.

Use the following web address to access back issues of *Stop Trafficking!*
<http://homepage.mac.com/srjeanschafer/sds/stoptraffic/index.html>

To contribute information, or make requests to be on the mailing list, please use this e-mail address: jeansds2000@yahoo.com

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