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Hearing on "Human Trafficking in the United States: Protecting the Victim"

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Good Morning. I want to express my great appreciation to the Committee Chairman for inviting me to share Iowa's experience in responding to human trafficking.

Today you have heard from a courageous sex trafficking survivor, and two highly qualified experts, one from Washington DC and the other from New York City, New York, both are making huge differences in the lives of girls and women every day. I am humbled to be included in their company today.

I learned early in my career that listening to the victim is an absolute. Their wisdom is worthy of our greatest attention because it was received through a crucible of absolute despair. If we will only listen to them they will show us how to best serve them and to fight effectively against those who have harmed them. I am indebted and appreciative to the experts for providing a guiding light for us to follow. I am from Des Moines, Iowa, a place not normally associated with national discussions about crime and victims but we have both just like any other place in the country.

Over the course of more than three and a half decades I have investigated all manner of crimes, listened to victims and gained a great deal of experience. As my biography reflects since 1998, I have worked in unique assignments that have provided me an unusual and deep insight into the dark corners of the minds of offenders who prey on children and vulnerable women that many officers may never have. I have learned about their hidden world and as much as some have argued to me otherwise, I know it exists around all of us and no place is immune to it. I have learned first hand about the terror and hopelessness victims endure everyday while their bodies are sold to fill the pockets of their captors.

The undeniable truth is that Trafficking is in Iowa just as it is in every other state in our country; it is in our small towns and our big cities; - our children and young women and men are suffering unimaginable cruelties even as we sit here today talking about it. Trafficking is a hard fact some will simply deny, others will dismiss saying the occurrence is "minimal" or "isolated" and not worthy of our attention or the cost and still others will say we're just calling prostitution by another name. So long as that denial and dismissal exist - it will stand in the way of a committed and aggressive response against this horrible crime and will condemn the victims to an existence as a slave. As Americans, as human beings, we must learn, we must act and ultimately each of us must ask: if not us - then who?

In early 2012, Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller attended a meeting of the National Association of Attorneys General where the topic of human trafficking was addressed. During the course of that meeting General Miller personally spoke with survivors of human trafficking and after hearing their stories realized that the issue was not only appalling but that the time for talking about it was over and it had to be attacked head on. Returning to Iowa he immediately set about leading his senior leadership team in devising a plan to address human trafficking in Iowa.

It was during this time that I met a survivor of human trafficking, a young woman named Brittany. As I listened to her I soon realized that like so many other officers, I have likely met many other trafficking victims in my career but did not recognize them at the time and did not help them in the way they needed to be helped. I now know my failure caused them to continue living in a hell I can never fully comprehend and it steels my resolve to do all that is possible so that no officer ever lets it happen again to any victim anywhere and so I thank the committee for its work on this critical issue.

I wish to provide the Committee with a DVD entitled "Any Kid Any Where" which presents Brittany's story along with those of two other Iowa girls who are survivors of trafficking. The DVD was created by a non-profit organization called "Braking Traffik" located in Davenport, Iowa, founded by former Iowa state senator Maggie Tinsman, the author of Iowa's original statute on human trafficking.

As we began working with human trafficking we learned that reactions of disbelief of the victim's stories are common and that some times it was the even the reason officers, prosecutors, service providers and others may not have taken the victim seriously and not investigated a matter more aggressively. Admittedly the victim's story may indeed sound beyond the line of reality but that depends largely on whose experience you're comparing it to, yours or the victim's. This response is unfortunately not completely unexpected given that a national study done by Northeastern University in 2008 indicated that 75% of law enforcement at all levels did not believe that human trafficking was taking place in their jurisdiction.

I am unaware of any study that has addressed that same question more recently, however, based on anecdotal information and my own experience, I would not expect the answer to be markedly different today.

In December of 2012, the Iowa Attorney General finalized his response and created the Human Trafficking Enforcement and Prosecution Initiative or HTEPI. I have provided the committee with the mission statement and objectives of the HTEPI. I was asked by The Attorney General Miller to lead this effort and he gave me this objective "make Iowa the most hostile place in the country for human trafficking, so hostile that they would rather go around us than go through us". Ladies and Gentlemen that is exactly what I and many other dedicated people set out to do.

I would like to introduce the Committee to my Chief Partners partners here with me today. I would like to introduce Ms. Terry Hernandez, Executive Director of the Chrysalis Foundation a non-profit organization doing amazing work with girls and young women by funding and providing after-school programs for girls who

may be at risk and leadership development training, life skills building and career development opportunities for young women in the Des Moines metro area. The Chrysalis Foundation was the very first NGO or non-government organization to join the Attorney General's Initiative and have been at our side ever since the beginning. The committee has received several information documents prepared by the Chrysalis Foundation.

Next it is my pleasure to introduce to the Committee Captain Curt Henderson of the Iowa State Patrol. CPT Henderson is here representing the Iowa Department

of Public Safety and Iowa's Public Safety Commissioner Dr. Roxann Ryan, J.D., Ph.D. Captain Henderson has also been with the Attorney General's Initiative from the beginning and has been nothing short of incredible in his drive and success. CPT Henderson is passionate about human trafficking and has been my training partner since 2012.

CPT Henderson is responsible for bringing the Texas Department of Public Safety to Iowa to teach our State Patrol and Division of Criminal Investigation their very successful roadside interdiction program called Interdiction for the Protection of Children. The honorable committee members from Texas can be very proud of your state's department of public safety's leadership in human trafficking training across the country.

The Captain is also responsible for making it mandatory training for every sworn member of the Iowa Department of Public Safety to complete the Department of Homeland Security's "Blue Campaign" online thereby raising awareness across all five Divisions of the Department.

Captain Henderson presents training on human trafficking to the Iowa Department of Public Safety basic academy each training cycle as well as to law enforcement agencies across the state.

As you can see from our mission statement and objectives we have three basic priorities; enforcement, victim services and community awareness. As we began the task of learning what trafficking looked like in Iowa it became apparent that two things were true; it has been present for many years and secondly law enforcement was not trained to identify and investigate it.

As we looked for information about law enforcement responses to trafficking I was made aware of the work of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in Rochester Minnesota because of their work with trafficking victims. I contacted them and they were gracious enough to set up a meeting for myself, CPT Henderson, Ms. Hernandez, Iowa State Representative Sharon Steckman and Mary Ingham, an Iowa victim service provider. The Sisters hosted the meeting in their beautiful church in Rochester and arranged to have Rochester Police detectives, prosecutors from the Olmsted County Attorney's Office and the County Attorney himself and representatives from a victim service organization called Mission 21. The meeting lasted all day and we left with some very significant information and suggestions.

After that meeting I was contacted by the Olmsted County Attorney who invited me to a conference in Alexandria MN that was the "kick off" event for Minnesota's Safe Harbor law. The event proved to be a great training and networking opportunity and so to the committee members from Minnesota I want to offer my

thanks and appreciation for your state's assistance and support.

Since 2012 the HTEPI has presented 324 non-law enforcement professional education programs, specific law enforcement training sessions and community awareness meetings with over 18,000 people attending. This is in addition to the work of our education and prevention partners including Braking Traffik, the Network Against Human Trafficking, Teens Against Human Trafficking, Youth Shelter Services, Youth Emergency Shelter Services, Central Iowa Services Network, Achieving Maximum Potential, the Lutheran Church of Hope and Plymouth Congregational Church Trafficking Task Forces and the Junior League of Iowa.

As we continued to examine the various components of how trafficking works we determined that because Iowa has two US interstate highways running through it North to South and East to West, reaching major cities and all four borders of our country as well as numerous state highways the need to work with commercial transportation interests in Iowa to effectively address human trafficking was critical. I approached Chief Dave Lorenzen of the Iowa DOT Motor Vehicle Enforcement Division and requested assistance.

Chief Lorenzen and his staff responded immediately. Some of the contributions they have made include being very active in the commercial transportation industry education effort training operators, owners and trucking company executives and safety directors on human trafficking indicators and reporting protocols, hosting a very successful coalition building event between all of the commercial trucking firms based in Iowa, truck stop operators in Iowa and leaders from Iowa's law enforcement community, making it a requirement for every person receiving a CDL (commercial driver's license) in Iowa to complete the Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) educational and awareness training and each driver receives a wallet card bearing the National Human Trafficking Resource Center's 24 hour Hotline number for reporting suspicious activity. The Chief has also ensured that that Hotline number and information is conspicuously posted in every rest area in Iowa and provided to every truck stop.

The challenges facing law enforcement as it becomes more familiar with human trafficking are many but in my opinion the most critical is changing the way trafficking is discussed and understood by law enforcement and the public. We must change the paradigm and vocabulary to bring accurate understanding to how traffickers obtain their victims and control them. We must dispel the myth of "choice" and replace it with the truth of how victims are controlled. We must talk about prostituted people and not prostitutes, we have to stop thinking a 14 year can actually choose to become a prostitute and do it on their own because it simply is not possible. We must see the victims as they are and not what the trafficker has forced upon them.

I would like to offer a few comments concerning the legislation now pending before this committee. As I have just stated a critical task before law enforcement today is the matter of treating the victim like a criminal. The legislation offered by Senator Klobuchar brings a laser focus to this point. In Iowa last year our state legislature passed a change in the law that specifically addressed county prosecutors and the ability to keep a child charged with a criminal act, performed at the direction or coercion of the trafficker, out of the criminal justice system by using a child in need of assistance, or CHINA petition to obtain services and treatment for the child and prosecution could be

dismissed. The intent of that law is strongly aligned with Senator Klobuchar's Safe Harbor law.

The legislation offered by Senator Cornyn would offer law enforcement, victim services and community awareness efforts significant assistance by providing much needed funding for task forces and victim services. The funding identified in section 4 of the legislation is what every state is struggling to obtain and the uses for those funds are critical to the success of any anti-trafficking effort. The legislation also hits a core issue, that of demand reduction.

I want to thank the committee chairman and members of the committee for the opportunity to spend this time with you today.

Thank you.