

## Posters call attention to human trafficking



Michael C. Green, executive deputy commissioner of the State Division of Criminal Justice Services, speaks Tuesday during a press conference at the Guilderland service area on the Thruway. Officials unveiled a poster which will be used to raise public awareness about human trafficking. Molly Eadie -- meadie@digitalfirstmedia.com

By [Molly Eadie](#), Troy Record

Posted: 01/13/15, 5:06 PM EST | Updated: 3 weeks, 3 days ago

GUILDERLAND >> An informative poster to raise awareness of human trafficking and exploitation was unveiled at an unusual site Tuesday: the Guilderland service area on the New York State Thruway.

The poster will be placed in six languages in 27 service areas along the thruway, as many traffickers physically move victims from their homes to other areas, according to a press release from the Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Office.

The poster lists a toll-free hotline - 1-888-373-7888 - which can be used in 170 languages, for Thruway motorists who might see a situation of trafficking.

### Advertisement

Victims or observers of human trafficking can also text "HELP" or "INFO" to BeFree (233733).

"Human Trafficking Awareness Month shines a light on the often overlooked crimes of sex and labor trafficking," said Albany District Attorney David Soares. "Most people believe these crimes are not happening locally, but they are. Trafficking is one of the most underreported crimes in New York, and awareness efforts are the key to bringing these cases forward.

This is not easy to identify. The poster outlines some aspects of human trafficking, and says victims may be unusually anxious, fearful or submissive; work unusually long hours; be in debt to an employer; be paid below minimum wage or not at all; live and work in the same place; be prostituted by another person.

This crime affects more than 1,000 children in New York each year, and it is estimated that nearly 18,000 people are brought into the United States against their will annually for the same purpose.

The federal Justice Department also reports there are as many as 300,000 minors at risk of being trafficked in the United States. Immigrants are especially at risk.

“We all know the stories about the young woman who’s told she’s going to get a great job if she comes to the states, and finds herself being caught up in prostitution. We know about somebody who’s told he can come up and get a job as a domestic worker and get great pay and they become slaves, their passport taken away from them, so they never leave the household,” said New York Secretary of State Cesar A. Peralas. “The stories are very many, very varied, what happens to people who are often brought here. what i’m interested is making those people aware that we can help them.”

As issues like immigration and domestic violence are closely involved in human trafficking, a comprehensive response requires collaboration across agencies.

Working in cooperation with the Governor’s Office, 13 executive agencies -- the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, the Division of Criminal Justice Services, Department of Health, Department of Labor, Department of State, Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, Office of Children and Family Services, Office of Mental Health, Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Office of Victim Services, Department of Agriculture & Markets, Division of Human Rights, and the State Police – comprise the state’s Interagency Task Force.