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Public Can Help with Devastating Issue of Child Sex Trafficking

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National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Reminds Residents to Be Vigilant

Domestic child sex trafficking is prevalent in Las Vegas, where 2,229 minor sex trafficking victims were identified between 1994 through 2012. By the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. Many more go unreported, as this most heinous of child abuses continues to rise as criminals relish in its profitability and the low likelihood of severe punishment.



“The consistent increase in child trafficking is of grave concern,” said Nevada Supreme Court Justice Nancy Saitta. “The network that creates and generates the ‘business’ of trafficking is lucrative and often hidden from the day-to-day activity of our community. The trade is conducted under cover of secrecy and/or darkness where it easily continues to victimize our most vulnerable population. I am troubled by the fact that despite best efforts by our law enforcement officials, the sad statistics of children becoming a part of the

process (or part of the ‘circuit,’ as it is known) is significantly escalating. Yet, there is less awareness of the problem and not nearly enough attention being paid to combating this epidemic or providing services, as needed.”

Las Vegas has always topped the FBI’s list for child prostitution. And the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department has investigated about 2,200 children exploited through sex trafficking since 1994.

With an estimated [293,000 U.S. children at risk of commercial sexual exploitation](#), the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, with federal backing, is helping judges identify victims and children at risk.

“In some states, when trafficked children come into contact with the court system, they are processed through the juvenile justice system as youthful offenders instead of being treated as victims,” according to Shawn C. Marsh, Ph.D., Chief Program Officer of Juvenile Law at NCJFCJ, who adds that technology is compounding the problem. “Traffickers can ‘post’ a body for sale and in real time, attract those cruising for a young child.”

The FBI reports that from 2008-2010, 83 percent of sex trafficking victims found within the U.S. were U.S. citizens. These children are often branded as delinquent, but they are actually in desperate need of advocates and life-saving services.



“We, as a court system, developed a protocol where law enforcement and child protective services work collaboratively to ensure youth, who are at-risk for child sex trafficking, are provided safety and the appropriate services expeditiously,” said Judge Darlene Byrne of the 126th Judicial District Court in Travis County (Austin), Tex. and NCJFCJ president-elect. Judge Byrne is a powerful advocate for child victims of sex trafficking.

[The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#) urge the public to help identify and assist victims:

- Know telltale signs, including a girl who is always with an adult male (other than her father) or who is withdrawn, disassociated, aggressive or can’t engage
- Flag the behavior.
- Say something. Contact the [National Human Trafficking Resource Center](#) at 1-888-373-7888, text 233733 (Text “HELP” or “INFO”) or visit traffickingresourcecenter.org.