

Stop Trafficking!

Awareness Advocacy Action

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter • January 2026 • Vol. 24 • No. 1

FOCUS: As we welcome 2026, this newsletter contains potential New Year's Resolutions to which you may commit to help end human trafficking.

As we consider resolutions for the New Year, it is an excellent opportunity to consider one action, or more, you can take to help stop human trafficking in 2026.

Ending Human Trafficking Starts with Education

Since the founding of the [Alliance to End Human Trafficking](#), education and awareness have been considered vital to end the exploitation and abuse associated with trafficking. All programs, resources, and activities are designed to raise awareness of the various forms of human trafficking, prevent individuals from becoming victims, and end the demand for human trafficking by addressing its root causes.



Human trafficking happens globally across many sectors. The Alliance to End Human Trafficking compiles the latest reports and statistics from government, private, and nonprofit sources. Please click [here](#) to view the latest reports.

Become Informed

Education and awareness are the first lines of defense against trafficking. When people understand human trafficking and its warning signs, they're better equipped to combat trafficking in their communities. For parents, protecting children from trafficking involves educating them about online risks.

The first step is to become informed of the signs of both sex and labor trafficking.

According to the [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) and the [Blue Campaign](#), signs that may indicate sex trafficking include:

- Person wishes to stop participating in commercial sex but feel scared or unable to leave the situation. Disclose that they were reluctant to engage in commercial sex but that someone pressured them into it.
- A person lives where they work or is transported by guards between home and workplace; they do not have freedom of movement. This can also be an indicator of labor trafficking.
- Children who live with or are dependent on a family member with a substance use problem or who is abusive; children who stop coming to school.
- A person has a sudden behavior change, shows signs of abuse, or has bruises.
- A person works in an industry where it may be common to be pressured into performing sex acts for money, such as a strip club, illicit cantina, go-go bar, or illicit massage business.
- Have a controlling parent, guardian, romantic partner, or "sponsor" who will not allow them to meet or speak with anyone alone and coaches them on what to say, or who monitors their movements, spending, or communications.

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Awareness

Become Informed (cont.)

Men, women, and children who are trafficked for labor are often isolated from the general population; however, you could interact with someone who is being trafficked, and some signs that could indicate trafficking include:

- A person feels pressured by their employer to stay in a job or situation they want to leave.
- A person owes money to an employer or recruiter or is not being paid what they were promised or are owed.
- A person does not have control over their passport or other identity documents.
- A person is living and working in isolated conditions, essentially cut off from interaction with others or support systems.
- The person appears to be monitored by another person when talking or interacting with others.
- A person is being threatened by their boss with deportation or other harm.
- A person is working in dangerous conditions without proper safety gear, training, adequate breaks, or other protections, or living in unsafe, overcrowded, or inhumane conditions provided by an employer.

Take measures to ensure your children and teens, as well as yourself, know how to recognize traffickers' recruitment tactics, how to safely navigate out of a suspicious or uncomfortable situation, and how to reach out for help at any time.

A life changing investment - preventing human trafficking. Please click [here](#) to view this 12-minute TED talk.



Educate Children About Social Media

Teaching children about healthy boundaries, online safety, and the realities of child trafficking can empower them to recognize and report suspicious behavior. The [Centers for Disease Control](#) and [Love 146](#) offer the following tips to keep children safe online:

- Children may deserve space for privacy from their parents, but the internet is not that place.
- Monitoring social media platforms and setting age-appropriate boundaries can deter online predators.
- Consider your child's current device and app, and assess how easily they can access inappropriate content. Check the privacy settings everywhere you can.
- Research or try out games or new technology before introducing them to your child. Initially, be present and play with them.
- Talk to your child about what to do if they see private parts, get messages from strangers, or see something upsetting online.

- Encourage your child to come to you even when they do something they should not do.
- If your teen already has relationships with people they met online, validate those relationships by asking them about the relationship in the same way you would with their other friends and connections.

Take It Down: This service from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is one step you can take to help remove online nude, partially nude, or sexually explicit photos and videos taken of those under 18.

Thorn For Parents: Thorn for Parents offers age-appropriate discussion guides, conversation starters, and topic overviews so parents can feel more comfortable with these potentially awkward conversations about technology and child exploitation.

NetSmartz: NetSmartz is an interactive, educational program of NCMEC that provides age-appropriate resources to help teach children how to be safer on- and offline. The program is designed for children aged 5-17, parents and guardians, educators, and law enforcement personnel. With resources such as videos, games, activity cards, and presentations, NetSmartz entertains while it educates. Its goals are to educate children on how to recognize potential Internet risks, engage children and adults in a two-way conversation about on- and offline risks, and empower children to help prevent themselves from being exploited and to report victimization to a trusted adult.

Savvy Cyber Kids: Savvy Cyber Kids provides free guides for parents, grandparents, and teachers on current technology, educating children about online risks, and discussing sex in the context of the digital age. Resources for educators focus on frameworks for lesson plans about technology, appropriate for different age groups. Please note that users have to create a free account to access resources.

Advocacy



Use Your Voice

A powerful way to help prevent human trafficking and help survivors of this injustice is to contact your elected representatives about supporting legislation to strengthen penalties for traffickers, while providing comprehensive services for survivors. Some core topics of federal legislation you may advocate include:

- Human trafficking and forced migration: People forced from their homes and their nation of birth due to war, violence, climate disasters, often without legal documents and societal supports, including in many cases other family members, are at risk for both sex and labor trafficking.
- The [Alliance to End Human Trafficking](#) is actively working for legislation to support and aid trafficking survivors, including:
 - ◇ Expungement of federal and state criminal records of survivors related to human trafficking-related convictions.



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Use Your Voice (cont.)

- ◇ Removing the cap on and/or substantially increasing the availability of T Visas.
- ◇ Funding for prevention, recovery, and support services.
- Along with the [Polaris Project](#) and many other organizations working to end human trafficking, the Alliance is advocating for the reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, first passed by Congress in 2000.
- The Alliance to End Human Trafficking supports legislation that will protect children online and that will:
 - ◇ Ensure that the internet, technology platforms, applications, and tools are age-appropriate and stop child exploitation and trafficking.
 - ◇ Technology companies will do more to identify and report Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and to ensure that children are safe online.
 - ◇ Remove liability protections for technology companies so that children and their families have legal remedies and rights of redress when companies or individuals exploit, traffic, and abuse them. Urge Congress to Remove Section 230 Immunity to Stop Online Sexual Exploitation!
 - ◇ Ensuring unaccompanied minors have legal representation and proper oversight to prevent trafficking and exploitation.

Target Demand

The importance of consumer demand as an essential factor in human trafficking is well established. According to the [International Labor Organization](#) in 2024, forced commercial sexual exploitation generates \$172 billion in illegal profits annually, thriving on the demand for commercial sex acts and exploited labor. Early intervention and public awareness campaigns help reduce demand that fuels trafficking for sex and/or labor.

Advocate for the Equality Model

When we talk about sex trafficking and who is creating the demand, we recognize that it is not only the pedophile or other sexually deviant outsider who creates demand, but rather the 'everyman', and on occasion, female customers. This understanding should make us all feel responsible and engaged in addressing this issue.

Sweden first adopted what is now called the Nordic Model or the Equality Model as an approach to end trafficking and prostitution that aims to criminalize the purchase of sex and pimping while decriminalizing the sale of sex. The model is based on the idea that prostitution and sex trafficking are harmful to both the people involved and to society as a whole.

One of the key strengths of the Nordic Model is its ability to reduce consumer demand and profitability when buyers face the risk of punishment. This, in turn, leads to a decrease in human trafficking for sex in countries that have adopted this model. The model has gained traction in most Scandinavian countries, the state of Maine, and is under consideration in New York, Vermont, and Massachusetts. It's endorsed by the Alliance to End Human Trafficking as an effective means to combat sex trafficking.

In states that legalize prostitution, such as Nevada, the demand for prostituted women and children, and, consequently, sex trafficking, increases. Click [here](#) to take action and learn more about the equality model.

The United Nations Trafficking Protocol includes the need to address demand relating to the prevention of human trafficking. It states that governments should seek to 'discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to trafficking'.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2000

The Code

When you make plans for a conference in a hotel or to stay in the hotel make sure before you register that they have signed on to [The Code](#) (short for “The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism”) is an initiative to provide awareness, tools and support to the tourism industry to prevent the sexual exploitation of children.



Action



Introduction

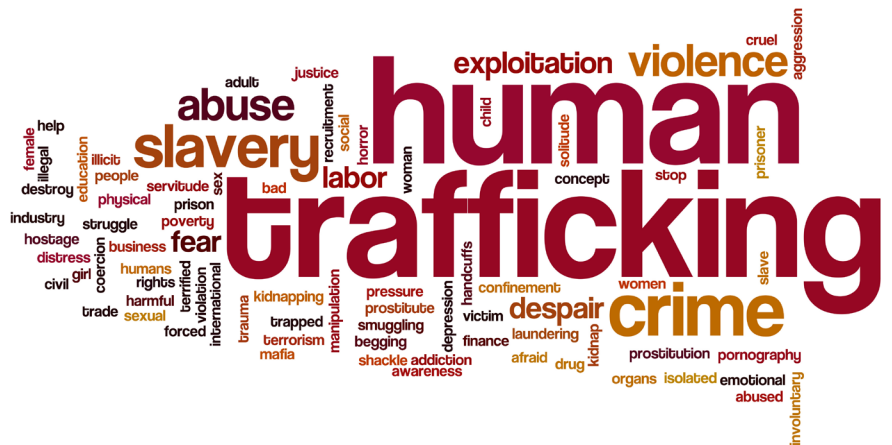
As consumers, we participate in labor trafficking by providing a demand for cheap products. It's crucial to be aware that children, women, and men, both in the United States and throughout the world, are trafficked and held against their will to provide us with the many goods and services we use and purchase daily.

Whenever we enjoy a meal either at home or at a restaurant, purchase clothing or shoes, or use our cell phones and computers, our lives are intertwined with child or forced labor trafficking victims who were involved at one or more points in a supply chain.

These supply chains cross national borders and rely on multiple subcontractors, which encourages employers to ignore fair labor laws and practices. Often, employers are unaware of exploitive hiring practices within their operations.

Our consumer culture tells us what we need and what we need more of. The most significant action we can take to end child and forced labor is to re-examine our approach to unquestioned

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Introduction (cont.)

consumerism. Last January, some people committed to a "No Buy January," where they only bought essentials, and others dedicated themselves to a "No Buy Year." These small individual actions, when combined, can make a significant difference.

When people understand the link between human trafficking and conscious consumerism, they become part of a significant movement to end exploitation. By collectively choosing products made with human rights in mind, we are challenging the profitability of child and forced labor.

So, what can you, your family, your workplace, and your community do to combat labor trafficking, besides advocating for government regulations that ban the importation of products known to be made with forced labor?

What can you do to prevent human trafficking for labor?

The simple answer is to be an informed consumer and to care enough to act on your beliefs.

One way of seeing how your life is interconnected with child and forced labor is to take the [Slavery Footprint quiz](#), which allows you to see 'How many slaves work for you?'

This quiz seeks to address the consumer demand that fuels human trafficking.



TraffickCam

This is an app you can use whenever you are staying in a hotel. When you are in your hotel room, take photos of the walls, decorations, and other features, and use this app to send the images to the [Traffick Cam](#) database. When a victim is being advertised for sex, she or he is sometimes photographed in the hotel room where they are being trafficked. Authorities then check the photos used in the advertisement with the database and can often see which hotel the victim is in.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the database is used daily and has been successful in locating victims and prosecuting traffickers. At times, the perpetrators are gone before law enforcement can arrive, but they still can use the information to prosecute the trafficker when authorities locate and arrest them.

Good on You

[This app](#) is an effective way to hold fashion brands accountable. Good On You researches clothing companies and compiles the information into an easy-to-understand score based on the companies' commitments to people, animals and the earth. This app enables consumers to make informed decisions on where they are purchasing clothes and increases brand transparency.



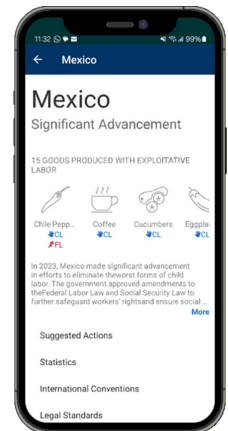
If you are in the United States and believe someone may be a victim of human trafficking, call the 24-hour National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or report an emergency to law enforcement by calling 911. Trafficking victims, whether or not U.S. citizens, are eligible for services and immigration assistance.

**NATIONAL
HUMAN
TRAFFICKING
HOTLINE**

1-888-373-7888

TEXT 233733

The **Sweat and Toil App** is put out by the Department of Labor and is relatively easy to use. For example, if you want to buy chili peppers you go to the counter where they sell chili peppers and the little tag on the peppers will say, for example, “grown in Mexico”- and your app will then state “FL” in red indicating forced labor was used to bring these chili peppers to your store. You then need to make a personal decision about whether to buy them or not.



Other actions you can take to help end human trafficking:

- Organize a fundraiser and donate the proceeds to an anti-trafficking organization .
- Become a member and join a committee or working group with **Alliance to End Human Trafficking**. There are several choices: Education and Resource, Survivor Services, Advocacy, and Communications.
- Empower Vulnerable Communities: Prevention starts with protecting vulnerable individuals. Financial investments in at-risk communities create educational and economic opportunities, reducing exploitation risks. This includes addressing factors like sexual orientation discrimination and economic instability.



High school students across the United States are invited to participate in a short video contest responding to the prompt: *What Would You Do?* to help prevent human trafficking.

STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING: PATHWAYS TO PREVENTION High School Video Contest

Win \$1,000 for 1st place, \$750 for 2nd and \$500 for 3rd!

Deadline for video submissions:
MARCH 1, 2026

www.alliancetoendhumantrafficking.org/high-school-contest



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HUMAN TRAFFICKING**
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United in Prevention

Current Trends and Prevention Strategies

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Keynote Speaker

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