

SLAVERY NO MORE 2012 GLOBAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE
August 10-11 ~ LOS ANGELES, CA

Welcome: Los Angeles City Attorney Carmen Trutanich

Peter White: Good morning everyone. Thank you for being here. Our first speaker kicking off our day here started his career in the DA's office in the hardcore trafficking division. He has earned numerous accolades, named top ten environment lawyers in California. He was voted *California's Super Lawyer* I think four years running now. He has one the highest possible accolades in his field, highest rating in legal ability and ethical standards. Since becoming the Los Angeles City Attorney, he has been a strong proponent of human trafficking legislation and truly has a heart for this cause. We're very honored to have him here today. Would you please welcome the Los Angeles City Attorney Carmen Trutanich.

Carmen Trutanich: Good morning. Those of you who are interested Mexico, two. Brazil zero. You know what a beautiful day in Los Angeles isn't it? It's just amazing. I got up this morning and saw the sun shining and go it's going to be another great day. I wonder what they're doing in North Carolina. They're under umbrellas if you want to know. Good morning. It's my pleasure to be here this morning, and thank you for inviting me to speak at this conference on human trafficking. This is a top that is near and dear to my heart.

Human trafficking is a terrible crime that goes against the basic human rights, and in actuality it's a form of modern day slavery. Victims are forced to endure fraud, coercion, commercial sex, pornography, forced labor. Just think of the exploitation, and that's what happens in human trafficking. Human trafficking has become the second fastest growing criminal industry. This should put it into perspective for you. Behind drug trafficking according to the United States Justice Department, "*Children account for roughly 50% of the victims. 80% of the trafficking victims are women and young girls.*" Isn't that amazing? Children? And we haven't heard about this. It should be on the news every single night.

Los Angeles is one of the top three points of entry into this country for victims of slavery and trafficking. Why? Because we're such a diverse community. It makes it easier to hide and move victims from place to place, and it's very difficult for law enforcement to look under every rock and see in every crevice to locate survivors and victims of human trafficking.

I've had the opportunity to work with my son on a human trafficking case. My son is an Assistant United States Attorney in Los Angeles in the Justice Department. He had a warrant on a case in Pasadena, right on the boarder of Los Angeles, Pasadena. There was a house in the middle of a neighborhood and 14, 15 people smuggled in from Mexico. Just recently a federal grand jury indicted eight people, and this is the scary part. Four who were allegedly members of a south Los Angeles street gang on charges related to sexual trafficking of teenage girls who were recruited from the *Inland Empire* from high schools, middle schools, and groomed to work as prostitutes across southern California.

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Our street gangs are diversifying. Under aged girls were approached by a lead prostitute who worked within the ring and attended the same school. The lead prostitute would groom these girls, gain their trust, tell them that they would make lots of money by working as a prostitute. The girls were recruited, brought here to Los Angeles, were thrown into flea bag motels or pimps apartments. They were beaten, raped, locked up, and forced into prostitution. Isn't that amazing? I'm the father of three girls, four children, and I just cannot imagine missing a kid or losing a kid to something like that. The pain the parents endure trying the stolen innocent life of their children.

Sex trafficking of women and juveniles is a disturbing crime. Criminal organizations including street gangs are expanding into areas of prostitution and human trafficking, and it has to stop. Once I became City Attorney, I focused on these types of crimes. I'm doing everything in my power to stop it. I tell you being a parent is a great learning ground for being a city attorney. It creates a personal commitment, and it realizes that when you look at prostitution what you're seeing is an outward manifestation of a problem that has spawned way, way, way down on the road, and we have to find our way back down that road.

So we've established partnerships. The Los Angeles Metro Task Force on Human Trafficking is a sponsor of this very important event. We are proud to partner with them. It's a multiagency consortium, created to address human trafficking in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area. I am proud to say that [Anne] Tron, I don't know if Ann's here yet this morning, if she is let me give her the acknowledgement as a member and currently serves on that task force. She's a Deputy City Attorney, and we are proud to have her there.

That's just one of our partners in this very important area. Our main partner is Los Angeles Police Department. Pimping and pandering are closely entwined with trafficking. Often prostitutes are victims of trafficking, and they don't even know it. That to me is just amazing that the people who are the victims of trafficking aren't even aware because of the coercion that they are victims of this type of crime. Traditional approaches of arresting these prostitutes and prosecuting them basically put a bandage on the sore but allows untouched the illegal perpetrators of the real operations to continue in their business.

That is why my office now is currently working with the Los Angeles Police Department to encourage deeper investigations into pimping and pandering. I've assigned neighborhood prosecutors, and everybody has heard well he got rid of the neighborhood prosecutors. No we did not. What we did was we reorganized them. We gave them actual caseloads, so we could take things like this and make them effective prosecutors.

When I was in the DA's office, I was in the hardcore gang section of the District Attorney's office. We fought against hardcore gangs in Los Angeles, but I had a full caseload of murder cases, robberies, kidnappings, things of that nature in the Compton area. We tried those cases as hardcore gang prosecutors vertically and have adopted that same mentality and that same style in this area. Why? Because one deputy handles a case from start to finish.

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You ask yourself how's that different? Generally in the prosecution of cases, you'll have somebody do the arraignment. You'll have another deputy handle the pretrial. You'll have somebody else do the trial. Then whoever who's the calendar court deputy will handle the sentencing.

In these types of crimes, we start from soup to nuts same guy. Why? Because it gives the deputy an opportunity to get into the case, get into the investigator, get into the victim, and give us an opportunity to expand the investigation to go back to the beginning of this thing and find the root cause of the trafficking, and in this area, that's exactly what we're doing.

Prosecutors in our Family Violence Unit also work on trafficking. They are focusing the aspect of commercial exploitation of children, including child prostitutes. It just gets me sick when I say that. Our deputy in this area is Donna Edmundson. She's Deputy City Attorney. I don't know if Donna's here yet but a very hardworking lady and dedicated to this area. She participates in the *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Subcommittee* for ICAN, the *Los Angeles County Interagency Coalition on Abuse, Child Abuse, and Neglect* and has worked with the *Innocence Lost Task Force* which is just when you think about that Innocence Lost, what an acronym to describe what happens to kids in this area.

My office is in conjunction with *the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, CAST*, includes trafficking awareness, materials on our Prostitution Diversion Program so that first time offenders placed in the program who do not realize that they're victims can learn that they are in fact victims of trafficking. They can come forward and start telling us about these organizations and the people and the names, so we can begin to do the things that we do. We don't just prosecute. We talk with Los Angeles Police Department. We talk with the Justice Department. We talk with the FBI. We talk with the DEA, and we look for ties between different types of criminality. Our Prostitution Diversion Program is current now available in 11 LAPD divisions. For those of you who want to know, it's southwest division, the southeast division, the harbor division, the central Hollenbeck, Northeast, Newton, Rampart, Wilshire, and Hollywood. This coming week we've already set up a meeting to expand our *Prostitution Diversion Program* into the remaining ten LAPD Divisions, so we will be able to blanket the city of Los Angeles.

It is interesting to see how crooks expand their business opportunities. What do they do? They're no different. They employ the same tools that any other marketing firm would do in order to expand their business. Quite often in this age of computers and digital technology gangsters and pimps make connections with children they seek to traffic through the internet. Minors are often contact via chat rooms or social networking sites, very innocently at first to establish a dialog. They're approached with offers of money or maybe being in a commercial or fame in Hollywood. Kids like to dream. As they make that bond of trust on the internet, those dreams turn into nightmares as they're forced into a life of prostitution.

Our Cybercrimes Division in conjunction with the Federal Internet Crimes against Children Taskforce, we work on these crimes whenever there is an internet connection. The one

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thing I've learned since we've been here is that the tools to enhance the prosecution and the stopping in this area are greatly, greatly needed, and they're not there. You think that the only tool we have is to prosecute these guys criminally. As the City Attorney of Los Angeles, I do misdemeanors. I don't do felonies. We don't put people in state prison.

You say well how can you get involved if you just do misdemeanors and you don't do felonies? One prostitution is a misdemeanor. Conspiracy to commit prostitution is a felony. We have an opportunity on the criminal side to get involved, but more importantly and you'll see this in what we do with marijuana dispensaries, and you'll see this when we do this with housing cases. We've learned that you can stop this through a civil action. We got the drug dealers out of Skid Row with an injunction. We're going to stop the scalpers in the Los Angeles Metropolitan Entertainment Area, the zone, from all down the 110 Freeway with an injunction which is going to save thousands of man hours in police time. We didn't have the tools to do that with prostitution.

Do you know that the penalties associated with gambling were greater than human trafficking? Does that tell you where the priorities have been? So our office sponsored *AB 2212* because of the existing lack of laws and effective enforcement mechanisms against traffickers who engage in profit from these acts. My office is working in conjunction with other prosecutorial offices to enhance criminal prosecutions. If you have a criminal prosecution, we can encompass that criminal prosecution now with an abatement action. We can also turn landlords into tipsters to let us know where this is happening. Under law *AB 2212* if signed into law by the governor would bring human trafficking into the mainstream of nuisance abatement law and would provide prosecutors with tools to use shutting down these operations and providing victims needed resources.

Buildings found to facilitate human trafficking...Buildings not people. Buildings which means the owners, corporate or individual found to facilitate human trafficking will be declared a nuisance and forced to shut down and access the civil penalty of \$25,000. If you own a building and you suspect that there's illegal human trafficking or illegal activity involving prostitution going on in your building, unless you want to be fined \$25,000 step up. One half of these penalties recovered will go to the community based organizations, the private partnerships that we have providing services to victims and prevention programs.

AB 2212 is already passed the assembly, and it's already passed the senate. We need the governor to sign this to give us the tools in order to make sure that these crimes stop. When it's signed, it will provide for us an effective avenue to facilitate the enforcement of civil actions. I'll tell you honestly, it's the civil actions that provide the necessary safety net to make these criminal actions successful. We can get all of the discovery in the world. There's no Fifth Amendment privilege here for corporations. We can get discovery, interrogatories, we can things that they can use in the criminal case.

If Los Angeles is one of the three places where this port of entry, we need this here, and we need it now. I hope this conference will be an opportunity for us to push that legislation. For

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us to share ideas and build partnerships that will strengthen our efforts to combat this modern day slavery. I want to thank *Slavery No More*, the *Los Angeles Metropolitan Task Force on Human Trafficking*, and the Skirball Center for hosting this event. To the speakers and panelists who took the time out of their schedules to be here on such a beautiful Saturday thank you for your dedication and hard work.

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