

unnecessary red tape these workers face and how we might remove these obstacles.

It would be foolish of us to let good talent go to waste, especially as our country continues to face a labor shortage, particularly in the healthcare sector.

This legislation is common sense. It will help immigrants and refugees who are in our country legally fulfill their potential, better provide for their families, and become even more of an asset to our economy. I urge a “yes” vote on this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues have pointed out, the Bridging the Gap for New Americans Act is particularly critical as we continue to recover from the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, more than ever, we must draw from the skills of our Nation's immigrants and refugees to accelerate our recovery and strengthen our communities.

In other words, this bill will ensure that the new Americans can re-establish their careers, succeed to their full potential, and join the effort to build back a brighter future for all Americans.

I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SEMPOLINSKI), the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO), the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. CROW), the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK), and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER), as well as Senator KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota, Senator CORNYN of Texas, Senator COONS of Delaware, and Senator MURKOWSKI from Alaska, for their leadership on this legislative priority.

I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3157.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NO TRAFFICKING ZONES ACT

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7566) to amend title 18, United States Code, to increase the punishment for human trafficking in a school zone, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7566

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “No Trafficking Zones Act” or the “NTZ Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds as follows:

(1) Child sex trafficking can have devastating immediate and long-term consequences, including health impacts, psychological and physical trauma, and even death.

(2) While any child can be targeted by a trafficker, research, data, survivors' lived experiences, and expertise have revealed that traffickers often target vulnerable youth who lack strong support networks, supervision, care, or basic necessities, have low self-esteem, have experienced violence in the past, are experiencing homelessness, are experiencing academic difficulties, or are marginalized by society, and lure them into forced labor and prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation. Traffickers are masters of manipulation and prey upon vulnerabilities using psychological pressure, intimidation, and drugs to control and sexually exploit the child for their benefit.

(3) The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) has received reports of child sex trafficking in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. These reports include incidents occurring in every type of community, including suburban, rural, urban, and Tribal lands. In 2021, NCMEC received more than 17,200 reports of possible child sex trafficking.

(4) Of 22,326 trafficking victims and survivors identified through contacts with the National Human Trafficking Hotline in 2019, at least 5,359 were under age 18.

(5) Many underage victims of sex trafficking are students in the United States school system. No community, school, socioeconomic group, or student demographic is immune.

(6) While the internet and social media make up the majority of first encounters, traffickers regularly find young people in shopping malls, through friends, at bus stops, and at schools. Specifically, traffickers systematically target vulnerable children and youth by frequenting locations where young people congregate, including schools. They also use peers or classmates, who befriend the target and slowly groom them for the trafficker by bringing the young person along to parties and other activities.

(7) A 2018 survey reported that 55 percent of young sex trafficking survivors in Texas were trafficked while at school or school activities and 60 percent of trafficked adults say they were first groomed and solicited for trafficking on school campuses.

(8) Schools can and should be safe havens for students. Schools are best positioned to identify and report suspected trafficking and connect affected students to critical services. Students are more likely to report instances of sex trafficking, attempted sex trafficking, or grooming for the purposes of sex trafficking where they feel most safe from harm and threats.

SEC. 3. INCREASED PUNISHMENT FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SCHOOL ZONES.

Section 1591 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

“(e)(1) Whoever violates subsection (a) in a school zone, or on, or within 1,000 feet of, a premises on which a school-sponsored activity is taking place, or on, or within 1,000 feet of a premises owned by an institution of higher education, shall, in addition to the punishment otherwise provided under this section, be imprisoned for not more than 5 years.

“(2) In this subsection:

“(A) The term ‘school zone’ has the meaning given such term in section 921.

“(B) The term ‘school-sponsored activity’ means any activity that is produced, financed, arranged, supervised, or coordinated by a school or a State educational agency or local educational agency or is under the jurisdiction of a State educational agency or local educational agency.

“(C) The terms ‘State educational agency’ and ‘local educational agency’ have the meanings given those terms under section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

“(D) The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the meaning given such term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).”.

SEC. 4. INCREASED PUNISHMENT FOR COERCION AND ENTICEMENT IN SCHOOL ZONES.

Section 2422 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by striking “individual who has not attained the age of 18 years” and inserting “minor”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(c)(1) Whoever violates subsection (a) or (b) knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, that the violation is committed against a minor who is enrolled in school and is, at the time of the violation, in a school zone or on, or within 1,000 feet of, a premises on which a school-sponsored activity is taking place, or against a person who is enrolled in an institution of higher education and is, at the time of the violation on or within 1,000 feet of a premises owned by the institution of higher education, shall, in addition to the punishment otherwise provided under this section, be imprisoned for not more than 5 years.

“(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply in a case in which a minor's presence on, or within 1,000 feet of, the premises on which a school-sponsored activity is taking place is not related to such school-sponsored activity, or the person's presence on or within 1,000 feet of the premises owned by the institution of higher education is not related to their enrollment at such institution.

“(d) In this section:

“(1) The term ‘minor’ means an individual who has not attained 18 years of age.

“(2) The term ‘school’ means a public, parochial, or private school that provides elementary or secondary education.

“(3) The term ‘school zone’ has the meaning given such term in section 921.

“(4) The term ‘school-sponsored activity’ means any activity that is produced, financed, arranged, supervised, or coordinated by a school or a State educational agency or local educational agency or is under the jurisdiction of a State educational agency or local educational agency.

“(5) The terms ‘State educational agency’ and ‘local educational agency’ have the meanings given those terms under section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

“(6) The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the meaning given such term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. FITZGERALD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 7566, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this bill was introduced as an important response to stopping human trafficking and sex trafficking at schools. In fact, its name was Stop Human Trafficking in School Zones. I introduced that bill to stop human trafficking in school zones.

I am glad to be here on the floor of the House to continue this journey in protecting our children. I want to start with the words from the Major Cities Chiefs Association, one of the major supporters of this legislation:

Child sex trafficking is one of the most despicable crimes an individual can commit. Sadly, there are far too many children victimized by this scourge. For example, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received more than 17,200 reports of possible child sex trafficking in 2021.

It is especially troubling that these crimes sometimes occur at schools which should be a safe haven for America's children.

Besides gun violence, human trafficking, sex trafficking is a scourge that takes and destroys the lives of our children.

H.R. 7566 will play an important part in addressing child sex trafficking by establishing additional penalties for offenders who commit these offenses in a school zone or within 1,000 feet of a school-sponsored activity.

We want to be heard on stopping human trafficking and sex trafficking at our schools. And so the No Trafficking Zones Act, which was formerly the Stop Human Trafficking in Schools Act, would ensure that schools across the country, including institutions of higher learning, are safe spaces for learning and academic exploration, free from the menace of sex trafficking.

H.R. 7566 would establish a sentencing enhancement of up to 5 years in several instances: First, in the case of any person who commits the offense of sex trafficking within a primary or secondary school zone or on or within 1,000 feet of the premises of a school-sponsored activity, or premises owned by an institution of higher learning.

Second, for any person who commits the offense of coercion and enticement of a minor enrolled in a primary or a secondary school, or a person enrolled in an institution of higher learning, to travel in interstate or foreign commerce and engage in criminal sexual activity while the minor is in a school zone, or on or within 1,000 feet of premises where a school-sponsored activity is taking place, or while the person is on or within 1,000 feet of the premises owned by the institution of higher education.

And third, for any person who commits the offense of coercion and entice-

ment of a minor using the mail or facilities of interstate or foreign commerce, such as the text and instant messaging or social media platforms which have been used extensively, while the minor who is enrolled in school or an institution of higher education, is in a school zone, or on or within 1,000 feet of premises where a school-sponsored activity is taking place, or premises owned by the institution of higher education.

Human trafficking is one of the greatest threats to human rights in the United States. It destroys a human being's life, and it destroys, forever, a child's life.

In 2020, 11,193 instances of potential human trafficking were reported to the United States National Human Trafficking Hotline, with at least 70 percent of those instances involving sex trafficking, while an estimated 25 percent of all human trafficking victims in this country are in my home State of Texas at any given time, many of whom are minors.

Mr. Speaker, I gave and held the first human trafficking hearing, field hearing from Houston, Texas, with my cosponsor of this legislation, the honorable MIKE MCCAUL. I express my appreciation for his collaboration on this legislation, his enthusiastic collaboration, as he did join me when we held the first hearing on human trafficking in Houston, through the Homeland Security Committee.

What I would say is that Houston had been the epicenter of human trafficking. It was a powerful hearing, and I am glad that we have joined together now to stop human trafficking at schools.

Let me also offer my sympathy to him and his family for their loss.

At least 5,359 trafficking victims and survivors identified through the hotline in 2019 were under the age of 18. And in 2021, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received more than 17,200 reports of suspected child sex trafficking. Many of these young victims of sex trafficking are students in school systems, colleges, trade schools, and universities across the country.

A 2018 survey reported that in Texas, where no trafficking zone legislation passed with bipartisan support earlier this year, 55 percent of young sex trafficking survivors were trafficked while at school or school activities, and 60 percent of trafficked adults said they were first groomed and solicited for trafficking while on school campuses.

That has been a hotbed of opportunity for the scourge of sex traffickers who want to prey upon our innocent children. I am grateful that the legislation in Texas generated out of an effort chaired by Bishop James Dixon, chair of the Houston Sports Authority at the NRG Arena, and began to develop a policy where there would be no trafficking zones around major stadiums and events.

Members of this body know all too well that children are sexually ex-

ploited in many ways. Some young people are trafficked by their schoolmates or people they once considered friends. And while the traffickers seek out young people who have noticeable vulnerabilities, including problems at school, conflicts at home, or even the need to fill in a tuition gap caused by the loss of a scholarship, no child or young person is truly safe from the schemes of charismatic traffickers bent on exploiting and destroying young lives.

□ 1630

With the proliferation of social media and the myriad ways in which we communicate with one another, traffickers have put these same means of communication to their own use to find, target, lure, groom, victimize, and exert control over their victims while buyers are using technology to find and purchase sex anonymously.

Traffickers have infiltrated every known form of communication, especially the sites, messaging apps, and social media platforms our children use most frequently, leaving young children more vulnerable to manipulation. Access to the internet, cell phones, and smartphones make it easier, Mr. Speaker, for traffickers and buyers to communicate with children and youth.

Even when they are at school, in class, or attending school-sponsored activities, there are no barriers, no walls, no brick walls, cement walls, steel walls, that can keep a trafficker from getting a precious child.

As a result, trafficking has reached the halls, lunchrooms, gyms, dormitories, and classrooms of schools, colleges, and universities in every corner of the United States of America.

These staggering facts and statistics led me to introduce this bipartisan legislation, the No Trafficking Zones Act, along with Chairman NADLER and Representative MCCAUL, who I wish to thank for working with me, as I have said previously, as well as Representative JOHNSON of Louisiana for his amendment that included the protection for young people at institutions of higher education.

We came together in a bipartisan manner to exert the influence necessary to protect America's children collectively. I, again, thank Chairman NADLER, Representative MCCAUL of Texas, and Representative JOHNSON of Louisiana. I am delighted to work with them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, human trafficking, especially the sex trafficking of children, is an abhorrent crime, and all convicted offenders should face serious criminal penalties.

This bill would provide increased criminal penalties for human trafficking or coercing a minor to engage

in illegal sex acts in school zones or near school-sponsored activities, as my colleague from Texas stated.

Texas recently enacted a similar law. According to the Texas State Senate bill report, 55 percent of young sex trafficking survivors in Texas were trafficked while at school or during school activities.

The Justice Department's Office of Justice Programs reports that the average age of entry into prostitution is, unbelievably, 12 to 14 years old and that traffickers are known to recruit at schools and in after-school programs.

However, this legislation doesn't address a root cause of this serious problem, our unsecure southwest border. Tragically, we know that human smuggling and trafficking occurs daily at the southwest border.

Under Democrat leadership, this Congress has failed to fix the completely broken immigration system or to address the Biden border crisis, which cartels and other organized criminal organizations have exploited to smuggle and traffic children into our country.

Cartels and criminal organizations continue to take advantage of the Biden administration's complete failure to secure the southwest border.

We should focus Congress' efforts on securing our southwest border to prevent the type of human trafficking this legislation seeks to address.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of stopping human trafficking in school zones is such a crucial issue that I would hope that the focus of our debate today would be on saving the lives of children.

I will just simply make the point, being on the Committee on Homeland Security and chairing the Judiciary subcommittee that deals with Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, that we all can work together for comprehensive immigration reform.

Here we are today, specifically focused and pointed on ensuring that there are no trafficking zones in our country and specifically around our school zones where children cannot be harmed.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD letters from the Major Cities Chiefs Association; Texas State Representative Ron Reynolds; NAACP, Bishop James Dixon, Branch President; Break the Cycle U.S.A., Valerie Winborne, mother of trafficking victim; and Courtney Litvak, surviving—a summary of her experience where she was trafficked.

MAJOR CITIES
CHIEFS ASSOCIATION,
July 13, 2022.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. MICHAEL McCaul,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REP. JACKSON LEE, REP. NADLER, AND REP. McCAUL: I write on behalf of the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA) to register our support for H.R. 7566, the *Stop Human Trafficking in School Zones Act*. The MCCA is a professional organization of police executives representing the largest cities in the United States and Canada.

Child sex trafficking is one of the most despicable crimes an individual can commit. Sadly, there are far too many children victimized by this scourge. For example, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received more than 17,200 reports of possible child sex trafficking in 2021. It's especially troubling that these crimes sometimes occur at schools, which should be a safe haven for America's children. H.R. 7566 will play an important part in addressing child sex trafficking by establishing additional penalties for offenders who commit these offenses in a school zone or within 1,000 feet of a school-sponsored activity. These enhanced penalties will help establish a strong deterrent and ensure those who commit these heinous acts are held accountable.

Thank you for your leadership and ongoing commitment to protecting America's children. Please do not hesitate to contact me if the MCCA can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

JERI WILLIAMS,
CHIEF, PHOENIX POLICE DEPARTMENT,
President, Major Cities Chiefs Association.

RON REYNOLDS,
TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
July 13, 2022.

Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Crime,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NADLER AND CHAIRWOMAN LEE: As organizations and leaders in the movement to end human trafficking, we want to thank you for scheduling this important markup of H.R. 7566, the *Stop Trafficking in School Zones Act*, which you introduced along with Representative Michael McCaul. The need for legislation that makes clear that children and youth are never to be trafficked or pursued by sex traffickers especially while at school or participating off-campus in school-sponsored activities.

Human trafficking poses a grave danger to individual well-being, public health, public safety, national security, economic development, and prosperity. Child and youth sex trafficking can have devastating immediate and long-term consequences, including health impacts, psychological and physical trauma, substance use disorders, mental health problems, and even death. While any minor can be targeted by a trafficker, traffickers often target vulnerable youth, including those who lack strong support networks, supervision care, have low self-esteem, are experiencing academic difficulties, are marginalized by society, or ostracized by their peers. No child or community is immune. Recruiting and grooming occur everywhere that kids can be found, even in schools across the country. Traffickers frequent places where young people can be found, in-

cluding school-sponsored events like basketball and football games, field trips, and talent shows. They also use peers and classmates, who befriend the traffickers' targets and groom them for the trafficker by forming relationships with the students and bringing them along to parties and other activities, slowly acclimating them to the traffickers and their lifestyle.

Targeting youth online via social media, direct messaging, and the like has become an increasingly common tactic among traffickers. They will look vulnerable young people who are receptive to their advances. Grooming occurs online or in person, over an extended period. They gain their targets' trust, fulfill their needs, make promises, gradually isolating them and exerting control over their lives—sometimes virtually. Technology has made it much easier for traffickers to seek out children and youth.

To that end, we would like to express our strong support for H.R. 7566 because young people should be safe at all times—but especially while they are trying to learn or pursue school-related endeavors that enhance their educational experiences. We are thrilled that the House Judiciary Committee will condense this legislation that would establish a sentencing enhancement for those who would dare to commit sex trafficking or contact young people for such purposes while they are at school-sponsored activities and encourage members to vote yes.

We thank you for your leadership and as survivors and advocates dedicated to eradicating human trafficking, we are grateful for your commitment to ensuring that those who choose to target and victimize children will be held accountable.

Sincerely,

RON REYNOLDS,
State Representative.

NAACP,
July 13, 2022.

Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
Chairwoman, House Judiciary Subcommittee on
Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NADLER AND CHAIRWOMAN LEE: As organizations and leaders in the movement to end human trafficking, we want to thank you for scheduling this important markup of H.R. 7566, the *Stop Trafficking in School Zones Act*, which you introduced along with Representative MICHAEL McCAUL. The need for legislation that makes clear that children and youth are never to be trafficked or pursued by sex traffickers especially while at school or participating off-campus in school-sponsored activities.

Human trafficking poses a grave danger to individual well-being, public health, public safety, national security, economic development, and prosperity. Child and youth sex trafficking can have devastating immediate and long-term consequences, including health impacts, psychological and physical trauma, substance use disorders, mental health problems, and even death. While any minor can be targeted by a trafficker, traffickers often target vulnerable youth, including those who lack strong support networks, supervision care, have low self-esteem, are experiencing academic difficulties, are marginalized by society, or ostracized by their peers. No child or community is immune. Recruiting and grooming occur everywhere that kids can be found, even in schools across the country. Traffickers frequent places where young people can be found, including school-sponsored events like basketball and football games, field trips, and talent shows. They also use peers and classmates, who befriend the traffickers' targets

and groom them for the trafficker by forming relationships with the students and bringing them along to parties and other activities, slowly acclimating them to the traffickers and their lifestyle.

Targeting youth online via social media, direct messaging, and the like has become an increasingly common tactic among traffickers. They will look for vulnerable young people who are receptive to their advances. Grooming occurs online or in person, over an extended period. They gain their targets' trust, fulfill their needs, make promises, gradually isolating them and exerting control over their lives—sometimes virtually. Technology has made it much easier for traffickers to seek out children and youth.

To that end, we would like to express our strong support for H.R. 7566 because young people should be safe at all times—but especially while they are trying to learn or pursue school-related endeavors that enhance their educational experiences. We are thrilled that the House Judiciary Committee will consider this legislation that would establish a sentencing enhancement for those who would dare to commit sex trafficking or contact young people for such purposes while they are at school or school-sponsored activities and encourage members to vote yes.

Sincerely,

JAMES DIXON, II,
Branch President,
NAACP Houston Branch.

BREAK THE CYCLE,
July 13, 2022.

Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Crime,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NADLER AND CHAIRWOMAN LEE: As an organization and leader in this movement for over a decade to end human trafficking, we want to thank you for scheduling this important markup of H.R. 7566, the Stop Trafficking in School Zones Act, which you introduced along with Representative Michael McCaul. The need for legislation that makes clear that children and youth are never to be trafficked or pursued by sex traffickers, especially while at school or participating off-campus in school-sponsored activities.

Human trafficking poses a grave danger to individual well-being, public health, public safety, national security, economic development, and prosperity. Child and youth sex trafficking can have devastating immediate and long-term consequences, including health impacts, psychological and physical trauma, substance use disorders, mental health problems, and even death. While any minor can be targeted by a trafficker, traffickers often target vulnerable youth, including those who lack strong support networks, supervision care, have low self-esteem, are experiencing academic difficulties, are marginalized by society, or are ostracized by their peers. No child or community is immune. Recruiting and grooming occur everywhere that kids can be found, even in schools across the country. Traffickers frequent places where young people can be found, including school-sponsored events like basketball and football games, field trips, and talent shows. They also use peers and classmates, who befriend the traffickers' targets and groom them for the trafficker by forming relationships with the students and bringing them along to parties and other activities, slowly acclimating them to the traffickers and their lifestyle.

Targeting youth online via social media, direct messaging, and the like has become an increasingly common tactic among traf-

fickers. They will look for vulnerable young people who are receptive to their advances. Grooming occurs online or in person, over an extended period. They gain their targets' trust, fulfill their needs, make promises, gradually isolating them and exerting control over their lives—sometimes virtually. Technology has made it much easier for traffickers to seek out children and youth.

To that end, we would like to express our strong support for H.R. 7566 because young people should be safe at all times—but especially while they are trying to learn or pursue school-related endeavors that enhance their educational experiences. We are thrilled that the House Judiciary Committee will consider this legislation that would establish a sentencing enhancement for those who would dare to commit sex trafficking or contact young people for such purposes while they are at school or school-sponsored activities and encourage members to vote yes.

We thank you for your leadership and as survivors and advocates dedicated to eradicating human trafficking, we are grateful for your commitment to ensuring that those who choose to target and victimize children will be held accountable.

Sincerely,

BREAK THE CYCLE USA.

July 13, 2022.

Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Crime,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NADLER AND CHAIRWOMAN LEE: NTZ is a bi-partisan organization disrupting the criminal activity of human trafficking. NTZ's mission is to create No Trafficking Zones across the nation. In order to create no trafficking zones, we must have policies set in place to protect our communities from commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Children in America are being preyed upon every single day in schools across our nation. In 2021, NTZ was a part of the creation of the S.B.1831 "No Trafficking Zone Act" for schools in Texas. The "No Trafficking Zone Act" was authored by Rep. Senator Larry Taylor, was carried in the House by State Representative Senfronia Thompson, and approved with 100 percent bi-partisan support. Our belief is there needs to be unity in fighting for the protection of our great Nation's children.

In this letter, you will hear testimonies of Mother and the names of their daughters. You will learn brutal detail of what is sex trafficking. Sex trafficking is the slave trade where a person is raped and owned by another.

We want to thank you for scheduling this important markup of H.R. 7566, the Stop Trafficking in School Zones Act, which you introduced along with Representative Michael McCaul. America needs legislation that makes it clear, that children and youth are never to be commercially sexually exploited or pursued by sex traffickers, especially while at school or participating off-campus in school-sponsored activities.

An Alarming Fact: Did you know that 60 percent of trafficked adults say they were first introduced to trafficking (groomed or solicited) on school campuses?

We have support across the nation. Parents and families want their children safe while they are at school. Parents and families across our country are picking up the pieces of destruction as their children are being groomed and lured on school campuses or during school functions. We have human trafficking detectives, advocates, social workers, parents, elected officials, law en-

forcement leaders, school district superintendents, board members, PTO parents, survivor leaders, nurses, doctors, and anti-trafficking specialists coming together to say enough is enough. We need laws to protect our youth while they are in school from sexual predators. This is happening in all communities across our nation.

The term "institutional grooming" describes the perpetrator using a position of trust to gain access to a child/youth and avoid detection. Perpetrators of grooming can use online and offline methods to reach their victims.

Valerie Winbornes's daughter was trafficked in Virginia. She like most families said she received no help and there was no justice for her twelve-year-old daughter who was trafficked from her school.

Madelynn Bennetsen. She trusted a girl in JH who she thought was her friend—who would later lead her on the path of skipping class, running away from home, drugs, and trafficking. If there were more awareness and training for the staff in the school and even myself. We may have been more alert to these behaviors as red flags instead of teenage behavior problems. We make it our life's work to help others in honor of Mady. Mady was murdered by her trafficker and never returned home.

Mary Well's daughter was a target because she had Autism. She also was a young girl who was murdered and never returned home.

Courtney Litvack was trafficked out of Katy Texas. Katy is a suburban wealthy area in Harris County. She was sold to multiple traffickers and eventually taken to Las Vegas. Her family as all of these other families will express with grief that there was no justice.

Leddie a fifteen-year-old girl committed suicide after she could not get the proper help after being recovered from being sex trafficked.

Do you know traffickers pick out young girls on tick tok and Instagram and tell groomers to go lure them from school? In many states, the traffickers introduce girls as young as twelve to strip clubs. Fourteen and fifteen-year-old girls are trafficked by gangs, pimps, and organized crime and then "trained" and "broken in" at strip clubs. They will form a trauma bond with many of their traffickers and such a level of shame that most girls will not know how to leave even if they physically can. They will also have the girls become addicted to drugs becoming numb to being raped. The teen's addiction will have them not knowing or understanding everything that is happening and controlling them through their addiction and abuse. I have given definitions to the terms in this paragraph.

NTZ and I want to express our gratitude for scheduling this important markup of H.R. 7566, the Stop Trafficking in School Zones Act, which you introduced along with Representative Michael McCaul. The need for legislation that makes clear that children and youth are never to be trafficked or pursued by sex traffickers, especially while at school or participating off-campus in school-sponsored activities. Every day kids are going missing and are being sex trafficked from their schools or were contacted at their school. We must change this. This is unacceptable. Nelsen Mandela said There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.

To that end, we would like to express our strong support for H.R. 7566 because young people should be safe at all times—but especially while they are trying to learn or pursue school-related endeavors that enhance their educational experiences. We are thrilled that the House Judiciary Committee will consider this legislation that would establish a sentencing enhancement for those

who would dare to commit sex trafficking and slavery on our children at schools. I encourage and pray the members will vote yes. Respectfully,

JACQUELYN ALUOTTO,
President, No Trafficking Zone—NTZ.

COURTNEY LITVAK

Courtney has made it her mission to tell her story and speak out to spread awareness about human trafficking and help shape policy to protect other young people from falling victim to the schemes of human traffickers, and to hold traffickers accountable.

Courtney first became entangled in sex trafficking when she was still in high school.

Despite what some believe about victims of human trafficking, she grew up in a loving, church-going family, in a safe neighborhood, and attended an upscale, suburban high school in Texas. But, by the age of 17 she was under the control of her first trafficker and she was being advertised for illicit sex on websites like backpage.com.

Courtney was a junior in high school when a series of traumatic experiences occurred, leaving her emotionally and physically susceptible and in a downward spiral—like so many victims of human trafficking. She began participating in high-risk behaviors, including abusing drugs and alcohol.

A trafficker, with ties to her high school, used fellow students to prey upon her and use her vulnerabilities to their advantage—offering her friendship and support when she felt she had none, meanwhile drawing her gradually and deeper into “the life.”

Courtney was actually being groomed by two different organized crime networks simultaneously and each groomer chatted with her through social media and messaging other apps. One network even invested in grooming Courtney for almost an entire year. She grew to trust these people, who were in fact all friends of friends and all formerly attended her high school.

Her first trafficker picked her up from her school on multiple occasions. Consequently, she was unenrolled from her school and had her entire life uprooted in a desperate attempt for her family to intervene in her exploitation. Courtney returned back to her hometown where days after turning 18 she was taken from her home by the other invested trafficking network. She soon realized that this individual she thought she loved meant to pass her on to her next trafficker for a finder's fee of \$500.

Eventually, Courtney would be transported from Texas to California, then, Las Vegas—passing from the clutches of one trafficker to another.

The coercive tactics of her captors varied from subtle to overt, physical to psychological—from violent to caring.

On an occasion when she attempted to seek help, law enforcement officials treated her like a criminal, convincing her that the safest place for her was with her trafficker.

Fortunately, after years of exploitation, overdoses, and multiple suicide attempts, Courtney escaped her final trafficker in 2018. She sought trauma counseling and attended an intense out of state recovery program, became a consultant, and, in 2020, was appointed to the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I would just simply like to suggest that we can find trafficking in many other places.

I also include in the RECORD the article: “Epstein’s ‘ground zero’: How the financier reportedly wreaked havoc on Royal Palm Beach High School community.”

[From Business Insider, July 27, 2019]

EPSTEIN’S ‘GROUND ZERO’: HOW THE FINANCIER REPORTEDLY WREAKED HAVOC ON THE ROYAL PALM BEACH HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY

(By Kat Tenbarge)

Former Royal Palm Beach High School Assistant Principal Carolyn Brown told The Palm Beach Post it was an “open secret” that female students were involved in something suspicious that involved hundreds of dollars in cash and resulted in girls being bullied for being “prostitutes” and “sugar babies.”

What administrators didn’t know, or at least didn’t act upon, was that at least 15 underage girls enrolled at the high school were sexually assaulted by financier and now convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, according to police reports obtained by The Palm Beach Post.

Like dozens of other accusations against the shadowy financier, who is currently being held without bail on charges of sex trafficking of minors and conspiracy in the southern district of New York, Epstein’s Royal Palm Beach High accusers say he paid them to give him massages, during which he would coerce them into sex acts.

Epstein was well aware that his victims would have been high schoolers, since The Post reported that a Royal Palm Beach High transcript was found in 2005 in his bedroom desk drawer at his \$12 million Palm Beach estate, next to a massage table and an armoire filled with sex toys.

One Royal Palm Beach High accuser told police she was 16-years-old when Epstein asked her to give him a massage while she was topless. She said she told him she was in high school. He asked what her favorite sex position was.

Another 16-year-old told police Epstein said he would help her get into her dream college, New York University, after reviewing her SAT scores and high school transcript.

Epstein also wrote a note on his own Jeffrey E. Epstein-branded stationery, Palm Beach police officers found, which instructed an employee to deliver a dozen roses to an underage girl who performed in a Royal Palm Beach High play. Police found the note in Epstein’s garbage in 2005.

These findings were some of the evidence brought forward before Epstein signed a plea deal in 2008 that allowed him to avoid federal prosecution and serve 13 months of an 18-month prison sentence, during which he could work from a high-rise in Palm Beach 12 hours a day, 6 days a week.

Now, Epstein is pleading not guilty to sex trafficking charges that accuse the elite financier of assaulting upward of 80 women, many who were underage at the time of the assault, including some as young as 14. The Palm Beach Post reports that Epstein recruited girls from several Palm Beach, Florida high schools, but that Royal Palm Beach High was his “ground zero.”

The Post reports that girls who were part of Epstein’s underage sexual assault scheme were bullied for being “prostitutes” and “sugar babies,” which administrators took notice of when they found \$300 in a girl’s purse after she was caught fighting with another female student.

Attorney Adam Horowitz, who has represented some of Epstein’s accusers in eight civil lawsuits, was quoted as describing the girls who were allegedly targeted as vulnerable, with some “living in trailer parks,” in The Post.

Epstein asked girls to bring their friends, The Post reported, paying girls up to \$200 for recruiting new victims. “The younger the better,” he instructed them, according to

one accuser who was first approached by an adult who worked for Epstein in 2003 at a resort in Riviera Beach.

That accuser went into her senior year at Royal Palm Beach High with Epstein’s goal in mind, with The Post reporting she recruited at least eight other underage girls who then recruited their own friends, including some girls who were on the verge of homelessness and needed money, badly.

“Knowing what we know now, it’s so sad what happened to those girls,” Brown, the former assistant principal, told The Post.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD an article: “‘Open secret’ at Royal Palm High School: At least 15 students were lured to Jeffrey Epstein’s Palm Beach mansion” right out of the school.

OPEN SECRET AT ROYAL PALM HIGH: AT LEAST 15 STUDENTS WERE LURED TO JEFFREY EPSTEIN’S PALM BEACH MANSION

(By Lulu Ramadan)

Tucked in the drawer of Jeffrey Epstein’s bedroom desk, near a massage table and a wooden armoire filled with sex toys, was a teenage girl’s Royal Palm Beach High School transcript.

She was 16 years old when Epstein lured her to his Palm Beach home set at the end of a dead-end street behind a wall of hedges.

And she’s one of at least 15 girls from Royal Palm Beach High School who Epstein sexually exploited in that bedroom 15 years ago, police reports reveal.

Epstein, a multimillionaire financier then in his 50s, lured a procession of girls as young as 14 to his home to perform nude massages for money, police and court records say. The massages often ended with Epstein groping or sexually assaulting the girls.

Epstein’s victims attended several Palm Beach County schools, including Lake Worth Middle and Palm Beach Gardens High.

But Royal Palm Beach High, with about 3,000 students, many from the county’s rural reaches, was ground zero.

Evidence suggests Epstein knew his victims were school girls and the signs didn’t escape Royal Palm Beach High administrators. The girls endured teasing and classmates called them “prostitutes.” After two girls fought, an administrator found one of them had \$300 in her purse.

Aside from the student transcript found in Epstein’s desk in 2005, police collected more evidence and witness statements that suggest Epstein knew his victims were still school children:

He scrawled a note on Jeffrey E. Epstein-branded stationery instructing one of his employees to deliver a dozen roses to a girl who performed in a Royal Palm Beach High play. Police found the note in his trash.

One 16-year-old girl described to detectives giving Epstein a massage while she was topless. He asked her about herself and she told him she was a student at Royal Palm High. He then asked her which was her favorite sexual position, she told police.

Another girl, who met Epstein at age 16, said Epstein reviewed her college applications and SAT scores and promised to help her get into her dream school, New York University.

Though Palm Beach detectives uncovered these details in 2005, the Palm Beach County State Attorney’s Office and U.S. Attorney’s Office in Miami, then headed by Alexander Acosta, cut Epstein a plea deal that landed him in jail for 13 months on two charges of soliciting prostitution.

This month, a decade after his release from a Palm Beach County jail, federal agents in New York arrested Epstein, 66, on charges of sex trafficking minors. The move came eight

months after a Miami Herald investigation zeroed in on Acosta's role in Epstein's plea deal and let victims tell their stories publicly for the first time.

Epstein preyed on dozens of girls, at least 32 identified at the time by police but about 80 identified in 2018 by the Herald.

"These girls had never even been to Palm Beach island," said Adam Horowitz, an attorney who represented Epstein victims in eight civil lawsuits filed against the multimillionaire.

"Some of them were living in trailer parks. This was a whole new world to them."

FOR EPSTEIN: 'THE YOUNGER THE BETTER'

Some of the girls told Epstein they were uncomfortable with being touched during massages, so he asked them to bring friends instead, police reports and court records reveal.

He paid girls about the same amount, around \$200, to recruit a friend as he paid the girls who stripped down and performed massages, court records show.

Royal Palm Beach High was a target by coincidence.

"One of Epstein's recruiters managed to infiltrate that circle," Horowitz said.

The "recruiter" approached a 17-year-old Royal Palm Beach High School student in 2003 at a resort in Riviera Beach with an offer to make \$200 for an hour to give a massage, she told police two years later.

The teen went to Epstein's seven-bedroom home on the Intracoastal Waterway, where an assistant led her up a staircase lined with pictures of naked young girls and into Epstein's bedroom, police say.

In keeping with descriptions to police from many Epstein victims, the teen found Epstein wearing only a towel, which he later removed, before lying on a massage table.

Epstein tried to grope her, but she resisted. She told him she didn't want to be touched, she told detectives.

So Epstein asked her to bring friends to his home for cash instead. "The younger the better," Epstein said, according to her police statement.

Going into her senior year at Royal Palm Beach High, the girl became a conduit to the school, recruiting at least eight other girls she'd met on campus, court depositions and police testimonies reveal.

And those girls recruited more girls.

NAME-CALLING AND A FIGHT

One Royal Palm Beach High student told detectives in 2005 that she targeted promiscuous teens on campus. Another said she brought a friend on the verge of homelessness and strapped for cash.

School administrators knew something unusual was happening, police reports show.

Students teased the Epstein clique as "prostitutes" or "sugar babies," a term for young women who seek relationships with wealthy, older men. The Post learned from court depositions and former students.

The tension came to the administration's attention in February 2005, when a 14-year-old freshman, the first of Epstein's victims to speak to police, got into a fight on campus with a girl who called her a "prostitute," police said.

But the school kept no disciplinary record of the fight and didn't report anything, police learned in 2005.

At the time, it appeared the girls were making money doing something nefarious, one former administrator, then-Assistant Principal Carolyn Brown, said in a brief interview this month.

It was an "open secret," Brown said, stopping short of saying whether school administrators knew the girls were paid for sexual favors.

Brown was subpoenaed to testify in the 2005 criminal case against Epstein after she

found \$300 in the 14-year-old's purse on campus shortly after the fight, court records reveal.

Administrators considered and then dismissed the idea that it might be drug money, detectives wrote in a 2005 report.

Brown, who is retired, never spoke to prosecutors. Soon after her subpoena, federal prosecutors struck Epstein's plea deal calling for 18 months in county jail, registration as a sex offender and payments to victims.

It wasn't clear if the principal at the time, Sheila Henry, knew that more than a dozen students were involved with Epstein. Henry wasn't mentioned in police reports and could not be reached for comment.

But two former students reached by The Post, who asked to stay anonymous, said students gossiped that some girls had rich, older boyfriends who bought them expensive gifts. Six other students didn't recall any such talk.

None of the girls knew then what the public knows now: That a Palm Beach millionaire tapped a local high school to prey on girls for his sexual gratification.

"Knowing what we know now," said Brown, the former assistant principal, "it's so sad what happened to those girls."

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the article: "Police: Children recruiting other kids for human trafficking at schools." This was in Florida.

[From WKMG ClickOrlando.com, Nov. 1, 2018]

POLICE: CHILDREN RECRUITING OTHER KIDS FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING AT SCHOOLS
FLORIDA RANKS 3RD IN THE NATION FOR CALLS TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

(By Erik von Ancken)

Orlando, FL.—Human trafficking is real and it is happening in Central Florida.

Crystal Blanton, co-chair of the Marion County Human Trafficking Task Force, said she receives thousands of reports from the National Human Trafficking Hotline every year.

"Usually the reports are in the thousands, every year," Blanton said. "Thousands of people are being human trafficked. Right here in Marion County and across the state of Florida."

Blanton said it's not like the movies ("Taken" 2008), where young girls are taken during their summer vacations by foreign human traffickers to be sold to sultans or sheiks.

But local children, often as young as 12, are being recruited into a life of forced prostitution.

"I just think it's the internet, I hate to say it," Blanton said. "Social media has grown the field of human trafficking. It's easier for these traffickers to make contact with victims."

Blanton said traffickers look for vulnerable teenagers online—runaways, teenagers complaining about their lives and their parents, young people with drug addictions—and befriend them.

But human trafficking isn't confined to any race or class, according to Blanton.

Some victims were on the honor roll headed to college.

"We've had doctors' children who have been intertwined," Blanton said.

Blanton also said human traffickers align with students and use them and their schools as recruiting grounds.

"There are recruiters, juvenile recruiters in the schools, working with a pimp of some kind, and they are sent out in the schools and given a job to bring other minors on board," Blanton said.

Blanton said the task force has had success educating Marion County elementary, mid-

dle and high school principals in looking for signs of human trafficking and placing Human Trafficking Hotline posters in schools.

Mike Lanfersiek, a sergeant at the Human Trafficking Squad at Orlando's Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation (MBI), said the definition of human trafficking is forcing a person to have sex or to work through force, fraud or coercion.

"Human trafficking is quite simply the exploitation of another person for commercial sex or forced labor," Lanfersiek said.

Lanfersiek said once victims, female or male, enter into the life of human trafficking, they are kept there by their captor, taking advantage of their vulnerability.

"A vulnerability to substance abuse, the fear of physical beating, or withholding passports or documents, things like that," Lanfersiek.

Lanfersiek's Human Trafficking Squad has rescued hundreds of young women and children, often from hotels in the tourist district of Orange and Osceola Counties.

"Anywhere where the trafficker thinks there might be demand for commercial sex," Lanfersiek said.

Traffickers often set up their prostitution operation at hotels because they cater to visitors in town for business or pleasure who are looking for sex, according to Lanfersiek.

Lanfersiek said he just rescued a 15-year-old girl from a hotel on International Drive.

"She had met someone on the 'Plenty of Fish' website and felt this person was her boyfriend, exploiting her vulnerabilities, pimping her out," Lanfersiek said.

In July, MBI agents arrested three men for luring a teenage girl through a social media app to an International Drive hotel and then prostituting her and having sex with her.

In 2016, Orlando police charged two men with the death of a 14-year-old girl who they'd been allegedly prostituting, driving her to men's homes to have sex.

Lanfersiek said MBI regularly sets up undercover sting operations to catch traffickers and rescue victims.

MBI analysts spend their days online, searching through postings by human traffickers looking for victims and offering them for prostitution.

Lanfersiek offered this warning: If you're coming to Central Florida looking for a date for sex, you may get a date with an undercover officer.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, my good friend has spoken about the southern border. I include in the RECORD the article: "Recruitment and Entrapment Pathways of Minors into Sex Trafficking in Canada and the United States: A Systematic Review." Northern border, by the way, that I would offer to say.

[From Trauma, Violence, & Abuse]

RECRUITMENT AND ENTRAPMENT PATHWAYS OF MINORS INTO SEX TRAFFICKING IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

(By Kyla Baird and Jennifer Connolly)

Abstract—the domestic sex trafficking of minors is occurring across Canada and the United States. Understanding the routes into sex trafficking, including the way traffickers target, recruit and enmesh youth in the sex trade is invaluable information for service providers and law makers developing prevention and intervention initiatives. This review synthesized research on the exploitation processes and tactics employed by traffickers in the sex trafficking of domestic minors in Canada and the US. The authors comprehensively and systematically

searched five electronic databases and obtained additional publications and grey literature through a backward search of the references cited in articles reviewed for inclusion. Inclusionary criteria included: Studies published in the English language between January 1990 and June 2020 containing original research with quantitative or qualitative data on the recruitment or pathways into sex trafficking for minors trafficked within the US and Canada. The search yielded 23 eligible studies. The synthesis of the studies in the review converged on the notion of sexual exploitation occurring on a continuum comprising of three components; the recruitment context, entrapment strategies utilized by traffickers, and enmeshment tactics used to prolong exploitation. Findings highlight the significant physical, psychological and emotional hurdles faced by youth victims of sex trafficking and point to the importance of comprehensive and holistic approaches to prevention and intervention practices.

Human trafficking is a global problem that has garnered significant international and national attention over the past 2 decades. In 2000, 140 countries signed onto the Palermo protocol agreeing that human trafficking is a significant human rights violation and a criminal offense that requires prevention, the protection of vulnerable populations, and the prosecution of violators of the protocol. In North America, both Canada and the United States signed this protocol and have since passed legislation and policies to combat human trafficking. Sex trafficking became criminalized in Canada in 2005 when human trafficking entered the criminal code under section 279.01 and in the United States in 2000 with the passing of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). Sex trafficking is one of the most common forms of human trafficking consisting of the recruitment and exploitation of an individual through the use of threats, force, coercion, deception, or abuse of power for the purpose of a commercial sex act (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014). A commercial sex act, as defined by the American TVPA (2000), is “any sexual act for which something of value is given or received.” Common examples include prostitution, pornography, sexual massage parlors, and strip clubs. Commercial sex acts may be exchanged for money, drugs, shelter, clothing, or food (Cole & Anderson, 2013; Kotrla, 2010). Sex trafficking is rampant across the United States and Canada (Clawson et al., 2009; Dalley, 2010). Despite various political and social differences between these countries, they are united on the front of combating sex trafficking within their borders and expanding research to support effective evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies.

SEX TRAFFICKING OF MINORS (STM)

Minors (under the age of 18) are overrepresented among victims of sex trafficking, with the majority of victims recruited between 12 and 14 years of age (Jordan et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2009). Given the elevated risk for minors, research and legislation have begun to focus on the specific issue of the STM. Consequently, our understanding of the risks for recruitment, experiences, and needs of underage victims is growing, and important policy actions have been taken. In the past decade, both Canada and the United States have passed legislation, reformed laws, and enacted policies to combat issues of the STM. Legislative changes in both Canada and the United States have transformed the way victims are viewed and treated by law enforcement. More specifically, American and Canadian federal consent laws declared minors under the age of 18 unable to

consent to commercial sex and have shifted the lens of law enforcement from criminalizing youth in the sex trade to viewing them as victims (Adelson, 2008; Franchino-Olsen, 2019). Language in research on STM has followed suit, shifting from calling underage victims of sex trafficking “teen prostitutes” to “victims of STM.”

On the basis of age, youth from all sectors of society are at risk for recruitment into sex trafficking.

Developmental vulnerabilities such as identity formation, the need for belonging, desire for autonomy, desire for romantic relationships, and evolving problem-solving skills make them easily exploitable by traffickers who appeal to these vulnerabilities (Schwartz, 2015). Based on the growing literature, some youths are at greater risk for recruitment than others. Several risk factors for STM have been identified, including involvement with child protective services, history of childhood sexual abuse, homelessness, physical and emotional abuse, neglect, exposure to intimate partner violence, problematic relationships with caregivers, drug and alcohol abuse, and teen dating violence (Choi, 2015; Countryman-Roswurm, 2012; Countryman-Roswurm & Bolin, 2014; Farley et al., 2005; Franchino-Olsen, 2019; Kotrla, 2010; Landers et al., 2017). Traffickers are known to be deeply perceptive of the developmental vulnerabilities of youth and target their unmet needs through strategic recruitment methods.

Simply being a girl places a youth at an elevated risk status relative to boys (Estes & Weiner, 2001), with 98% of victims being women and girls (International Labour Organization, 2012). Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation due to social norms that cast gendered expectations and power imbalances in relation to sexual activities, with boys being expected to take sexual initiatives. Sexual inexperience, desire for romantic relationships, and insecurity among young girls can set the stage for manipulation and exploitation by adolescent boys or men (Hanna, 2002).

Based on the differential needs and situations of youth, the recruitment and exploitation of underage populations are thought to differ from adult populations (Bouché & Shady, 2017; Dank et al., 2014). While it may be riskier to traffic a youth due to increased policing efforts in protecting minors and higher sentences for STM, it has been suggested that these risks are offset by the youth being easier to manipulate and control and being highly desired by purchasers, bringing in more money for the trafficker (Dank et al., 2014). Compared to adults, youths have greater needs for protection, less life experience, and are dependent on adults for basic needs such as food and shelter, making them more vulnerable to traffickers who vow to provide care, protection, and basic needs (Bruhns et al., 2018; Cole & Anderson, 2013). Given youths' physical and emotional dependency on adults, some research have suggested youths are more trusting and less able to identify traffickers' coercive and manipulative strategies to entrap them (Cole & Sprang, 2015). Adult victims, on the other hand, are generally less psychologically dependent on their trafficker (Bouché & Shady, 2017). In addition, literature on the trafficking of adults identify several risk factors that are more unique to adult victim populations, including needing to financially support dependents, low educational attainment, and having few job skills (Holger-Ambrose et al., 2013). Despite differences in adult and underage victim populations, much of the extant research on recruitment for sex trafficking have pooled both underage and adult participants or examined victimized adults only, limiting our understanding of the STM spe-

cifically (Reid, 2014). In order to translate sex trafficking research into evidence-based initiatives to combat the STM, it is important for research to delineate the specific ways in which traffickers target and recruit youth into the sex trade. The current study aims to synthesize research that focuses on youth recruitment into sex trafficking in North America.

NORTH AMERICAN CONTEXT OF SEX TRAFFICKING

There have been few attempts to estimate the prevalence of the STM in North America; however, available statistics are often “guesstimates” rather than reliable rates (Franchino-Olsen et al., 2020; Stransky & Finkelhor, 2012). Available estimates for STM most commonly come from the United States, where the rates range from 1,400 to upward of 199,000 victims (Banks & Kyckelhahn, 2011; Estes & Weiner, 2001; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006; U.S. Department of Justice, 2004), with the most commonly cited study estimating upward of 325,000 children at risk for sexual exploitation in the United States each year (Estes & Weiner, 2001). However, available statistics are problematic as they often fail to distinguish between domestic and international victims, are based on varying definitions of sex trafficking, are geographically limited, and utilize nonreplicable, unreliable methodologies (Fedina et al., 2019; Franchino-Olsen et al., 2020; Stransky & Finkelhor, 2012). Researcher error aside, the very nature of the sex trafficking industry presents barriers to the acquisition of accurate statistics. Most significant among these is the fact that trafficking occurs largely underground, within criminal networks that are transient, discrete, and often invisible, even to law enforcement (Duger, 2015; Franchino-Olsen et al., 2020). Difficulty in obtaining estimates of an invisible crime is compounded by the fact that many individuals victimized by sex trafficking do not view themselves as victims of a crime and therefore do not report it in any official capacity (McClain & Garrity, 2011). Despite flawed and unreliable statistics, STM is known to be widespread across Canada and the United States, requiring immediate action and sound research to uncover trends and pathways of youth into sex trafficking including the way traffickers target, recruit, and enmesh youth in the sex trade (Clawson et al., 2009; Cole & Sprang, 2015; Dalley, 2010).

While STM defies geographic borders, a country's economic environment, geographic positioning, laws, employment rates, per capita income, and historical events shape the industry and individual risk for recruitment (Hepburn & Simon, 2010; C. O'Brien, 2009). As a result, trends in STM within North America are different from the European context. The permeable borders between European countries allow for easy international movement between proximal countries (Lindstrom, 2004). For example, one report found only 5% of all identified sex-trafficked victims in the United Kingdom (UK) were originally from the UK, which is a stark contrast to the picture of trafficking in NA where the majority of victims are domestic persons (Baird, McDonald & Connolly, 2020; Banks & Kyckelhahn, 2011; Mitchell et al., 2010; Royal Canadian Mounted Police [RCMP], Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre, 2014; Serious Organised Crime Agency, 2013). Given sex trafficking industries vary between countries based on differences in social, geographical, cultural, economic, and historical factors, it is not appropriate to generalize understandings of STM across countries that are dissimilar across these factors (Hepburn & Simon, 2010). As such, the current study narrowed its focus to systematically reviewing the recruitment of minors for sex trafficking in two countries, Canada and the

United States both of which have similar cultural, economic, geographic, and historical contexts.

The domestic STM is of major concern within Canada and the United States (Clawson et al., 2009; Dalley, 2010). While both countries adhere to the standards of affluent and profitable nations that are alluring destinations for international sex traffickers, research consistently shows that domestic youth (i.e., youth trafficked within their country of origin) comprise the majority of underage victims in their respective countries (Baird et al., 2020; Kotrla, 2010; RCMP, Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre, 2014). Due to the risks and challenges associated with transporting victims across borders, some research suggests that domestic youths are preferred by traffickers (Smith et al., 2009). In summarizing the literature on recruitment and entrapment, it is important to distinguish between international and domestic sex trafficking due to the nuanced differences in the process of exploitation. Comparatively, researchers suggest domestic sex traffickers more often utilize interpersonal relationships and domestic violence to entrap their target and international traffickers rely upon kidnapping, parents' selling their children, and offering false promises of jobs abroad for entrapment (Cecchet & Thoburn, 2014). Understanding the specific ways American and Canadian youths are recruited by traffickers and exploited domestically is important in developing effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, then let me offer this point of importance. The victims are not here on this floor, but we must carry their story to this floor, to ensure that we do not see another victim.

So I will offer these words from Courtney. Courtney has made it her mission to tell her story and speak out to spread awareness of human trafficking and help shape policy to protect other young people from falling victim to the schemes of human traffickers and to hold traffickers accountable.

She became entangled in sex trafficking while still in school. Despite what some believe about victims of human trafficking, she grew up in a loving, church-going family, in a safe neighborhood, and attended an upscale suburban high school in Texas.

At the age of 17, she was under the control of her first trafficker. She was being advertised for illicit sex on websites like Backpage. A trafficker with ties to her high school used fellow students to prey upon her and use her vulnerabilities to their advantage, offering her friendship and support when she felt she had none, meanwhile drawing her gradually and deeper into the life. She was actually groomed by two different organized crime networks simultaneously, and each groomer chatted with her through social media and messaging. One network even invested in grooming Courtney for almost an entire year.

Her first trafficker picked her up from school. She was unenrolled from her school and had her entire life uprooted in a desperate attempt to intervene in an exploitation.

She returned back to her hometown where days after turning 18, she was

taken from her home by another invested trafficker. She soon realized she was in this world, and over and over again she was used and transported from Texas to California to Las Vegas, passing from one hand to the next.

What a vile life. She is willing to share this life.

It is extremely important that we pass this legislation and that we address the question of what can happen to our innocent children.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for closing.

I would just once again like to emphasize the idea that although human trafficking is at the forefront of what we are discussing here today, we must continue to focus on the southern border and making sure that we secure that soon.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for closing.

Let me express my appreciation to those who sacrificed to share with us their stories and those who worked on this very important effort: Bishop James Dixon, II, the No Trafficking Zone cofounder and senior pastor of the Community of Faith Church, Branch President of the NAACP, Houston Branch; Jacquelyn Aluotto, NTZ cofounder, founder of Real Beauty Real Women; and Courtney Litvak, a member of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, who will participate in unveiling their annual report later this week; and so many others who have really helped. Jacquelyn Aluotto was someone who inspirationally wanted to lead us in this direction and worked very hard.

Each of us has a duty to protect young people, whether it be from drugs, gun violence, or sex traffickers. Our children deserve to be safe, and parents should know their children will be safe when they put them on the school bus or move them into their new dorms.

To be sure, H.R. 7566, the No Trafficking Zones Act, provides increased accountability for anyone who would dare interrupt or interfere with a young person's ability to obtain an education and lay the foundation for a productive future for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

In drafting this legislation, I am grateful for the contribution of the No Trafficking Zone Initiative and all of those whose names I have called, including those names not called, those victims silenced, or lives lost or destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 7566. This is a great day for helping to stop sex trafficking, human trafficking, where our children should be most safe, and that is at our schools.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 7566, the bipartisan "No Trafficking Zones Act," would ensure that

schools across the country, including institutions of higher education, are safe spaces for learning and academic exploration—free from the menace of sex trafficking.

H.R. 7566 would establish a sentencing enhancement of up to five years in several instances:

First, in the case of any person who commits the offense of sex trafficking within a primary or secondary school zone, or on, or within 1,000 feet of the premises of a school-sponsored activity or premises owned by an institution of higher education;

Second, for any person who commits the offense of coercion and enticement of a minor enrolled in a primary or secondary school or a person enrolled in an institution of higher education—to travel in interstate or foreign commerce and engage in criminal sexual activity—while the minor is in a school zone, or on, or within 1,000 feet of, premises where a school-sponsored activity is taking place or while the person is on, or within 1,000 feet of, premises owned by the institution of higher education;

And, third, for any person who commits the offense of coercion and enticement of a minor using the mail or facilities of interstate or foreign commerce—such as text and instant messaging or social media platforms—while the minor who is enrolled in school or an institution of higher education, is in a school zone, or on, or within 1,000 feet of, premises where a school-sponsored activity is taking place or premises owned by an the institution of higher education.

Human trafficking is one of the greatest threats to human rights in the United States. In 2020, 11,193 instances of potential human trafficking were reported to the United States National Human Trafficking Hotline with at least 70 percent of those instances involving sex trafficking, while an estimated 25 percent of all human trafficking victims in the country are in my home state of Texas at any given time—many of whom are minors. That is why the Stop Human Trafficking in School Zones Act that we are debating is so important to pass.

At least 5,359 of trafficking victims and survivors identified through the hotline in 2019 were under the age of 18, and in 2021, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received more than 17,200 reports of suspected child sex trafficking.

Many of these young victims of sex trafficking are students in school systems, colleges, trade schools, and universities across the country.

A 2018 survey reported that in Texas—where No Trafficking Zone legislation passed with bipartisan support earlier this year—55 percent of young sex trafficking survivors were trafficked while at school or school activities and 60 percent of trafficked adults said they were first groomed and solicited for trafficking while on school campuses.

Members of this body know all too well that children are sexually exploited in many ways. Some young people are trafficked by their schoolmates or people they once considered friends.

And while traffickers seek out young people who have noticeable vulnerabilities—including problems at school, conflicts at home, or even the need to fill in a tuition gap caused by the loss of a scholarship—no child or young person is truly safe from the schemes of charismatic traffickers bent on exploiting and destroying young lives.

With the proliferation of social media and the myriad ways in which we communicate with one another, traffickers have put these same means of communication to their own use—to find, target, lure, groom, victimize, and exert control over their victims. While buyers are using technology to find and purchase sex anonymously.

Traffickers have infiltrated every known form of communication—especially the sites, messaging apps, and social media platforms our children use most frequently—leaving young people more vulnerable to manipulation.

Access to the internet, cell phones, and smartphones makes it easier for traffickers and buyers to communicate with children and youth—even when they are at school, in class, or attending school-sponsored activities.

As a result, trafficking has reached the halls, lunchrooms, gyms, dormitories, and classrooms of schools, colleges, and universities in every corner of this nation.

These staggering facts and statistics led me to introduce this bipartisan legislation, the No Trafficking Zones Act, known as the Stop Human Trafficking in School Zones Act, along with Chairman NADLER and Representative MCCAUL, who I wish to thank for working with me, as well as Representative JOHNSON of Louisiana for his amendment, that included the protections for young people at institutions of higher education.

Each of us has a duty to protect young people—whether it be from drugs, gun violence, or sex traffickers. Our children deserve to be safe; and parents should know their children will be safe when they put them on the school bus or move them into their new dorms.

To be sure, H.R. 7566, the No Trafficking Zones Act, provides increased accountability for anyone who would dare interrupt or interfere with a young person's ability to obtain an education and lay the foundation for a productive future—for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

In drafting this legislation, I am grateful for the contributions of the No Trafficking Zone Initiative, Bishop James Dixon, Jacquelyn Aluotto, and Courtney Litvak, who is also a member of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking and will participate in unveiling their Annual Report later this week.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7566, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION ACT OF 2022

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7181) to amend the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to direct the Secretary of Transportation to seek to provide for the posting of contact information of the national human trafficking hotline in the

restrooms of each aircraft, airport, over-the-road bus, bus station, passenger train, and passenger railroad station operating within the United States, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7181

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Human Trafficking Prevention Act of 2022”.

SEC. 2. POSTING OF NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING PHONE NUMBER IN CERTAIN RESTROOMS.

Section 107(b)(1)(B)(ii) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (enacted as division A of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(1)(B)(ii))) is amended by—

(1) striking the third sentence; and
(2) inserting after the period at the end the following: “The contact information of the national human trafficking hotline (including options to reach out to the hotline such as through phone, text, or TTY) shall be posted as follows:

“(I) In a visible place in all Federal buildings.

“(II) The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall seek to coordinate with the owners and operators of aircraft, airports, over-the road buses, bus stations, passenger trains, and passenger railroad stations to place the contact information of the national human trafficking hotline in the restrooms of each such aircraft, airport, over the-road bus, bus station, passenger train, and passenger railroad station operating within the United States.

“(III) The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and in coordination with the heads of such other Federal agencies as may be appropriate, shall place the contact information of the national human trafficking hotline at each port of entry.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. FITZGERALD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 7181.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 7181, the Human Trafficking Prevention Act of 2022, would provide for the posting of the contact information for the National Human Trafficking Hotline in the restrooms of our country's transportation centers, where we know many trafficking victims pass through, as well as all Federal buildings and ports of entry to inform victims and those who witness suspected trafficking situations that help is available.

As I have said many times before, smuggling people across international borders is an equally troubling crime but distinct from human trafficking. Smugglers must be prosecuted, and the exploitation of their victims must not go unpunished. While many believe human trafficking happens only in other countries, the victimization of adults, youth, and children for the purposes of performing labor, commercial sex acts, and other services happens on an enormous scale in rural, urban, and suburban communities across the United States. We can document that by many organizations that are fighting the scourge of human trafficking.

H.R. 7181 would require the posting of the National Human Trafficking Hotline contact information in all Federal buildings; require the Department of Transportation and the Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate with owners and operators of transportation hubs such as airports, bus stations, and train stations to post the contact information for the hotline in their restrooms; and, three, require the Department of Health and Human Services and other appropriate Federal agencies to post the hotline's contact information at every port of entry.

In 2020, more than 11,193 instances of potential human trafficking were reported to the United States National Human Trafficking Hotline.

□ 1645

Ms. JACKSON LEE. In Texas, there are reportedly 313,000 victims of human trafficking at any given time, including 79,000 children and youth who are victims of sex trafficking and 234,000 adults who are victims of labor trafficking. The victims of human trafficking tend to be concealed, living in fear and isolated, in some cases physically and in other cases emotionally.

They might remain under the control of their traffickers for a variety of reasons, including a lack of the basic necessities to escape, like transportation or a safe place to go. Some may be afraid for their safety, while others may not recognize that they are under the control of their trafficker. Even after they are rescued or escape, there is always a possibility the victims will be revictimized.

The National Human Trafficking Hotline is an essential component of the fight to end human trafficking, offering toll-free phone lines and SMS text lines that are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The hotline provides help, safety, and hope to victims and survivors by connecting them to the support and services they need.

They must know that they are not alone. That is the most important message that we want to give on the floor of the House today. The victims of sex trafficking and human trafficking, the children and the adult victims, are not alone.

Victims in crisis can receive assistance with safety planning, emotional support, and/or immediate connections