

How Utah is Dealing with Human Trafficking

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Human trafficking is often portrayed as a hidden crime because it can happen out in the open without any obvious markers of what is really going on. In fact, it is likely that you have interacted at some point in your life with someone who has been the victim of this type of coercion and sexual abuse in Utah without being aware of it.

What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is a global threat that makes an estimated \$32 billion each year, making it second only after drug trafficking as the international crime that is the most profitable. Each year, millions of women, men, and children are forced or coerced into the commercial sex trade or into labor. Human traffickers can also use fraudulent means to lure people into this illegal activity.

A form of modern-day slavery, a person who is a victim of human trafficking is often reluctant to identify themselves as such. This could be due to a fear of the traffickers and/or law enforcement. In addition, having a language barrier could also deter a victim of human trafficking from getting help.

While sex trafficking tends to get a great deal of media attention, it is not the only form of human trafficking. Another significant and common type of human trafficking is forced labor. Victims of this form of human trafficking can be found in a number of industries — both illegitimate and legitimate. These could include hotels, massage parlors, domestic services, sweatshops, restaurants, agriculture, and more.

Signs That A Person Might Be Trafficked

The state of Utah maintains a Human Trafficking Tipline. It's run by the Utah Attorney General's office and is answered by an answering machine. The tipline is designed so that the general public can alert officials about potential human trafficking.

It's important to not approach a suspected trafficker or victim on one's own. Some signs that a person could be the victim of human trafficking include the following:

- the presence of bruises that are in various stages of healing
- a juvenile who is engaging in commercial sex acts
- lack of freedom of movement and an inability to leave where they live freely
- a person who is timid, submissive, and/or fearful
- a child who has stopped going to school
- the inability of a person to say what they want and being coached on what to say
- a person who appears to be controlled by another in terms of who they are able to talk to or where they can go
- a sudden and/or dramatic change in their behavior

Utah: Taking a Hard Stance Against Human Trafficking

In addition to the 24-hour tip line, Utah has a number of resources as well as laws. These are designed to educate the public and members of the judicial system while also providing protection to potential victims. The state has a Trafficking in Persons Task Force and enacts severe penalties for human trafficking and smuggling. In addition, a sex crime lawyer can provide valuable information.

Like other states, sex offenders must register in Utah. If you are concerned that someone you know might be a victim of human trafficking, a sex crimes attorney can be a good source of information.

For more information, or to speak to sex crime defense attorneys, contact Wasatch Defense Lawyers today. As experienced sex crime defense lawyers, they have the experience and knowledge to assist you.