



June 12, 2014

TO: Nebraska State Senators and Clerk of the Legislature

FROM: Governor Task Force on Human Trafficking, Subcommittee on Research

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Committee: Lee Kline; County Commissioner, Madison County

Jim Peschong; Chief of Police, Lincoln

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**On July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012 a task force was appointed. A report is to be submitted not later than one year after July 19, 2012, and every July 1 and December 1 thereafter, the task force shall report to the Clerk of the Legislature the results of its investigation and study and its recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry its recommendations into effect by filing the report with the clerk.**

The task force shall examine the extent to which human trafficking is prevalent in this state, the scope of efforts being taken to prevent human trafficking from occurring, and the services available to victims of human trafficking in this state. The task force shall also investigate the limitations upon victims who wish to come forward and seek medical attention; investigate the potential to stop human trafficking; and investigate the potential to promote recovery, to protect families and children who may be profoundly impacted by such abuse, and to save lives.

Attached is a copy of the subcommittee July 1, 2014 human trafficking research report.

## **I. A Research Feasibility Study has been approved by the Task Force.**

Dr. Dwayne Ball and Dr. Ron Hampton from UNL are conducting the study.

Over 50 research studies have been conducted by Dwayne and Ron with 11 of them specifically focused on human trafficking.

The purpose of this subcontract project is to provide research/statistical assistance in identifying 1) the scope of the research question: what are the numbers of prostituted underage women in Nebraska, who are therefore victims of sex trafficking? 2) The potential sources of data/information and 3) developing a statistical methodology and indicators (estimation approach) to estimate the numbers of victims of sex trafficking at one point in time.

In short, they wish to determine the feasibility of developing a valid estimation procedure.

Upon successful completion of this phase, it will then be possible to move to Phase II providing the legislature with information that would allow for the appropriation of funds for estimation statewide.

It is important to understand why the problem of estimating the number of victims of sex trafficking in Nebraska (or almost anywhere else) is so difficult.

It would be natural to think of police records of prostitution arrests first. Trying to estimate numbers from police records of arrests will result in gross underestimations because few perpetrators are caught, and many underage prostitutes are charged with something other than prostitution.

Another approach might be to try to observe and count prostitutes on the street, trying to determine if they are underage, but many of them are not on the street, and would lie about their ages if approached.

Another approach might be to count ads for what appear to be prostitution (massage parlors and escort services), but one never knows how many prostitutes are being advertised by any given ad, nor how many of those are underage, nor how many prostitutes are advertised by less visible means.

Social science might well argue for survey research, by selecting a random sample of 12-18 year-old Nebraska women (for example, via random-digit-dialing) and just asking if they are currently involved in prostitution. But, that approach faces these problems:

1. In order to estimate the fraction of individuals that have a certain characteristic in any population (such as the fraction of underage women in Nebraska engaged in prostitution), one needs a random sample from that population of all Nebraskans

in that age group that either can be observed for that characteristic, or will answer honestly about that characteristic if asked.

2. Prostitution is a crime and promoting underage prostitution is a felony. Anyone engaged in these crimes will try to hide in the shadows and be unobservable, and if found, be unlikely to admit their involvement. Therefore, trying to find a random sample of, and directly observe or survey current victims, is unlikely to be successful.
3. Even if one could reliably identify victims of sex trafficking among a good random sample of teenage Nebraskans, the incidence of victims is so low that one would need to observe or interview many tens of thousands of Nebraskans in order to accurately estimate the number of Nebraskans that are victims of sex trafficking.
4. Interviewing anyone under the age of 18 requires parental permission, and the expense and time involved in obtaining this, plus the high probability that the parents of victims of sex trafficking will refuse to allow their daughters to complete such a survey, argues against such an approach.

So, standard survey techniques of the population are unlikely to be successful. This leaves us with an untried approach that we need to investigate in Phase I. If we appear to be successful, we can then move on to Phase II.

Phase I will include the gathering of information through survey methods, but by using a random sample of Nebraska women aged 18-21 as something called “key informants.” That is, we will not ask them if they were victims of trafficking themselves when they were under 18, but we will ask how many victims of trafficking they knew in their own well-defined age group when they were in high school in Nebraska.

Based on our knowledge of those high school populations and class sizes in their particular schools at that time, we can construct an estimate of the number of teen-aged Nebraska girls that were victims of sex trafficking over the previous 6-8 years. This approach is similar to two key informant surveys that the principal investigators used in Ukraine 6 years ago, that were reasonably successful.

### **Time Frame**

The approximate time for each aspect of Phase I is as follows:

Development of the questionnaire	2 months
Obtaining of Institutional Review Board Approval	4-6 months
Implementation of the survey	3 months

Total 9-11 months

**Phase I - Feasibility Budget Honoraria/salaries Nebraska**

Principal/Co Investigator's Honoraria	\$12,000	Benefits (@ 28%
Graduate Assistant	4,000	
Travel	1,000	
Purchase of Mailing List(s) and Cost of Survey	10,000	
Analysis of Data	2,000	
Report Preparation / Printing	1,000	

TOTAL \$30,000

**II. Research on Labor Trafficking in Nebraska.**

The Research Committee has recently been tasked by the Governor Task Force to begin estimating the amount of Labor Trafficking in Nebraska.

Our goal is to present an estimated amount of Labor Trafficking in Nebraska to the Task Force before the next report on July of 2015.

The Research Committee will contact various agencies and interested persons to determine the extent that data is collected regarding labor trafficking. In addition, the Research Committee is reviewing the work of task forces in other states to determine how they have measured labor trafficking.

**III. Human Trafficking Legislation.**

The Research Committee will recommend Legislation to be introduced in the 2015 Legislative Session to fight Human Trafficking. Legislation will be proposed to the Task Force before December of 2014. The task force will then consider the recommended legislation and vote on the bill or bills they will support.

These recommendations will primarily be based upon the results of the ongoing sex trafficking study, the collection of data on labor trafficking and input from law enforcement.