



**Policy and Resource Roundtable Notes**  
*Keeping Native Children Safe: Human Trafficking in Indian Country*  
October 27, 2016  
9:00am-12:00pm

## KEY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Human trafficking is a criminal act that involves the coercion or victimization of individuals for labor or sex in order to turn a profit.
- Due to the effects of intergenerational trauma on Indian Country, Native Americans, particularly Native women, are targets of sex traffickers.
- Extractive industries on tribal lands and across the country are contributing to the rise of human trafficking. Partnerships and dialogue between tribal and federal governments, as well as with industries, are important in order to combat the issue effectively.
- Trainings for law enforcement and service providers are crucial and need to be expanded in order to detect and report instances of human trafficking.
- Culture is both a protective factor against human trafficking and a healing factor for victims involved in the crime.
- There needs to be increased effort to collect data regarding human trafficking in Indian Country.

## PRESENTATIONS

### CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

- Opening remarks by **Senator Dorgan (ret.)**.
  - There is not enough data on Native Americans – for trafficking, suicide, gang activity, etc.
  - We must work together to address these problems, rather than just stay in our silos.

### NATIVE YOUTH ADVOCATE: **FIONA TELLER, NAVAJO NATION**

- **Highlights:**
  - Native youth need to be educated about the issues of human trafficking in Indian Country. Most importantly, youth need to be aware that issues of poverty,

substance abuse, family violence, etc. that are so prevalent in Indian Country are implicated in the persistence of human trafficking.

- Acculturation, or the exchange of cultures, from countries and cultures that are lenient about prostitution is contributing to the rise of human trafficking in Indian Country. Strengthening the matrilineal tradition of Native American culture is vital in protecting against the spread of human trafficking.

- **Background of human trafficking:**

- *Human traffickers take advantage of vulnerabilities.* Due to enduring historical trauma caused by genocide and colonialist policies, many communities in Indian Country are extremely vulnerable, and pose as easy targets for traffickers.
- *Human trafficking is a market driven enterprise.* Traffickers coerce and victimize individuals in order to turn a profit.
  - Thus, sex trafficking requires the use of coercion or victimization. Prostitution, which is exchanging sex for payment, does not necessarily equal sex trafficking.
- *General statistics on sex trafficking:*
  - The average age victims are 12-13 years old.
  - Over 30,000 victims die each year as a result of sex trafficking.

- **Sex Trafficking, Culture, and Indian Country:**

- Sex trafficking has increased due to acculturation, or the exchange of cultures, particularly among Asian and European cultures. In these cultures, prostitution is more widely acceptable than in Native American communities.
  - Traffickers from countries that allow prostitution often send envoys to host countries like the US to recruit more people into their enterprise.
  - Sex traffickers often pay more for diversity.
- Because Native American cultures are matrilineal, it is important to strengthen cultural traditions to protect Native women against sex traffickers.
  - There is a need to educate young Native men to continue respecting Native women, and eschew cultures that allow the objectification and exploitation of women.

- **What needs to be done to reach out to Native youth?**

- More youth training and education through roundtables. Youth need to be educated about the systems involved in human trafficking (poverty, drug/substance abuse, alcoholism, etc.) and how pervasive it is in Indian Country.
  - In order to spread awareness, education and training should be accessible and should allow youth take their training back to communities.

- While sex trafficking affects women more, men also need to be a part of the conversation.
- Resources and services that combat sex trafficking need to be culturally competent as stereotyping/misunderstanding against peoples lead to cultural barriers.

**TRIBAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE: CAESAR ALVAREZ, MANDAN, HIDATSA AND ARIKARA NATION – DEPUTY OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

- **Highlights:**
  - While profitable for the tribe, the Bakken Shale industry has also introduced many non-Natives in the community who are exploiting Native women for sex trafficking purposes. Corporate social responsibility is needed to combat this issue.
  - Gaps in law enforcement between the federal system and tribal government has left sex trafficking crimes largely unchecked and unprosecuted.
- **Exploitive industries on tribal lands:**
  - While it has been profitable and has increased economic development and opportunities on the reservation, the Bakken Shale industry has also lead to increased violence and human trafficking.
    - Workers, many of whom are non-Native, have flocked to the reservations for job opportunities in the industry, leading to an increase in man camps where sex trafficking of Native women have been prevalent.
    - The high change of Native women, four times the national average, to be sexually abused has made them targets of sex trafficking at these sites. Additionally, many youth are the children of survivors of sexual abuse and have been highly exposed to this type of violence.
  - Shale is predicted to produce oil for several decades within the reservations, yet no engagement exists between the company and the tribe.
- **Gaps in law enforcement:**
  - Jurisdictional issues between crimes committed by non-Natives towards Natives have led to gaps in enforcement.
  - The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) only applies to domestic violence and not human trafficking.
  - As of now, the Federal government is responsible for prosecuting human trafficking crimes committed by non-Natives towards Native peoples. Thus, there needs to be an increase in federal presence within reservations while this gap in enforcement exists.

- NCAI Resolution 16-078:  
<http://www.ncai.org/resources/resolutions/support-for-maintaining-collaborative-efforts-with-federal-state-and-private-partners-to-combat-human-trafficking-in-indian-country>
- **Next steps to combat sex trafficking in tribal communities:**
  - Current services for victims on the reservations are underfunded.
  - Action needs to happen sooner rather than later since Shale is predicted to keep producing oil for years.
    - There is a current downturn in production with decreasing oil prices, which has helped find solutions to trafficking issues
    - MHA has already led roundtable discussions about the issue. In July, MHA Nation met with USDA Rural Development to talk about sex trafficking on its reservation.
    - MHA needs partners and information to lobby on the Hill and create awareness within its community, as well as increased capacity within the tribe.
    - *Responsible Resource Development and Prevention of Sex Trafficking: Safeguarding Native Women and Children on the Fort Berthold Reservation:*  
<http://www.colorado.edu/law/sites/default/files/MHAWhitepaperFinal.pdf>
  - Corporate social responsibility within the Bakken Shale and other exploitive industries is needed to prevent human trafficking within its industry.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES: **MARIA ODOM** – CHAIR, BLUE CAMPAIGN, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (AND **JEFFREY REZMOVIC** – COUNSELOR TO THE DEPUTY SECRETARY, DHS)

- **Highlights:**
  - The Blue Campaign at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is focused on finding measures to effectively combat human trafficking.
    - Human trafficking is the exploitation of people through victimization and coercion, not the transport of people.
  - Increased training for identifying trafficking at the federal, state, and local level, as well as better reporting measures, are needed to prevent human trafficking.
  - Human trafficking is very critical issue. It is important to take action sooner rather than later, and fine tune plans along the way. Partners join in eventually once the momentum is set.
- **About the Blue Campaign:**

- The Blue Campaign is an unappropriated employee volunteer initiative within DHS focused on preventing human trafficking. Volunteers serve for 6 months to 1 year.
- One of the cornerstones of the initiative is its *public awareness campaign*. The Blue Campaign has partnered with the transportation industry to put public service announcements and advertisements in trains, airlines, buses, etc.
- **Training to prevent human trafficking:**
  - *Trainings within the Federal Government:* The Blue Campaign has worked internally at Department of Homeland Security to train staff, employees, and other workers to recognize human trafficking and be aware of reporting measures.
    - This includes Customs and Border Protection (CPB), Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers, the U.S. Coast Guard, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers.
  - *Trainings in Indian Country:* The Blue Campaign has developed a four-hour scenario training for the Indian Police Academy in Arizona in order to detect trafficking of Native women on reservations.
    - Train the trainer courses are also available.
- **Furthering efforts:**
  - Federal agencies and enforcement officers will in most cases not be the first responders on the ground when trafficking is suspected or occurs. Partnerships are needed to extend resources externally.
  - The Blue Campaign is furthering partnerships with the hospitality sector, transportation, sports leagues, etc. in order to spread awareness and vigilance about human trafficking.
  - Engaging and educating extractive companies is a priority to stop human trafficking. For example, trafficking activity is often seen in truck stops. The TravelCenter of America whose customers are mostly truck drivers realize that this is an issue, but require resources. Partnerships with these companies are crucial.

TRIBAL ORGANIZATION: **SARAH PYTALSKI** – NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

- **Highlights:**
  - While data is scarce, there is strong evidence that human trafficking disproportionately affects Native women.

- There needs to be an increase in availability of services on tribal lands. Services that focus on trauma enforced care are especially important.
- **Statistics on Native American human trafficking :**
  - There is a lack of labor trafficking data for Native Americans; however, available data on prostitution is a starting point in mapping out the problem.
    - About 50% of surveyed women involved in prostitution met the conservative criteria for trafficking. About 86% of women say coercion was involved.
  - In communities with high percentages of trafficking and prostitution, less than 10% of the population are Native. However:
    - 1 in 2 are involved in commercial sex
    - 1 in 3 arrested for prostitution
- **Services available for victims:**
  - The most often used services for victims of human trafficking are services related to substance abuse and homeless shelters. Among these services and resources, there is strong preference among victims for peer support and trauma enforced care. They owe their survival on cultural practices.
    - However, two-thirds of tribal lands do not have any services for human trafficking victims.
  - Recently, law enforcements are starting to identify addicts, prostitutes, and other non-violent criminals not as perpetrators but as victims of trafficking.
  - The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in Canada is a model for raise awareness through Red Dress campaign.

## OPEN DISCUSSION

- **The role of federal and tribal governments:** Partnerships between federal and tribal governments is crucial in law enforcement against human trafficking.
  - Model criminal codes from the federal government would be helpful for tribal governments.
- **What can individual citizens do?**
  - According to Maria Odom, there is a deficiency in reporting right now.
    - The “See Something, Say Something” DHS sister campaign is a starting point for reporting. The telephone number posted on ads of the campaign connects directly to the local police.
    - Right now, the current hotline for human trafficking is only a tip line, not a reporting.
  - Pushing for local law enforcement to receive training and awareness on human trafficking is important.

- **Is there a data repository within tribal organizations?**
  - Because of the coercive nature of human trafficking, it is often difficult to get data from victims
    - Native women especially will not come to services due to lack of trust, stigma, etc. Most often, women come for reproductive health reasons.
  - The most promising data on human trafficking comes from service providers (doctors, police, etc.)
  - *Data Collection Pilot Project* - The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is currently trying to harvest data to put into a central repository.
  - *Child Trends*: some data available with them and is being used by media outlets.
- **How do we expand awareness of the issue?**
  - There needs to be increased public outreach to and by Native youth
    - Many Native youth still unaware of issue and need to be introduced to it
    - The Polaris Project toolkit has gone through several focus groups. A youth oriented toolkit will be published this month tailored specifically for young people.
  - Expand interest by including missing chair for Native women in scientific forums to open discussions about trafficking.
- **Other Resources and Projects**
  - Overall, there needs to be increased resources particularly in Indian Country:
    - Only 1 sex trafficking service for Native women available (in NM)
    - Only 1 human trafficking Center for Native Americans (in SD)
  - *National Institutes of Health* - NIH can conduct hypothesis driven studies but not data collection. Additionally, grants are available from different institutes for finding the efficacy of different services for victims of human trafficking.
  - *American Academy of Pediatrics* – pediatricians have been given framework for raising awareness about human trafficking. However, training is needed for all healthcare providers.
  - *Polaris Project* - Hotline for human trafficking
    - Used to access services, crisis cases
  - *National Indigenous Women's Center* (<https://www.niwrc.org/>)
  - *Administration for Children and Families* has training for health service providers
    - National Human Trafficking Center with HHS
      - This is their first year giving grants. The first was given to Alaska Native Services Center which focuses on providing housing assistance, substance abuse resources, etc. for victims.

- *U.S. Government Accountability Office* - The GAO is currently looking at data analyzing federal government initiatives/responses regarding human trafficking.
  - The second review is for perspectives on tribal and other local (city) law enforcement and victim service providers.
- *Trafficking in Persons (TIP)* report is available and attempts to figure out how other countries are judged for human trafficking.