



## **Connecticut's Anti-Trafficking Laws Lead the Way Nationally**

*New law requiring hotel and motel training goes into effect Oct. 1.*

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HARTFORD – Connecticut's anti-trafficking work has made such large strides that it has captured the attention of groups ranging from the U.S. Attorney General's office to the philanthropic group headed by singer Michael Bolton. Chief among these strides is a new law, which will take effect on Oct. 1, requiring hotel and motel operators to train staff in recognizing signs of human trafficking and which will also require such facilities to keep records of their guests, which will help law enforcement investigations.

"I've talked with advocates, case workers, and law enforcement who can list off motels where they know women and children are being trafficked," said Jillian Gilchrest, who chairs the statutorily created Trafficking in Persons Council (TIPC). "This law challenges the complacency of those motels and gives Connecticut law enforcement and prosecutors more tools to go after this crime. It also helps send the message that Connecticut will not tolerate the buying and selling of women and children for sex."

Gilchrest, who previously did anti-trafficking public policy work for the former Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, is now director of health professional outreach for the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Anti-trafficking work is part of the mandate of the newly formed Commission on Women, Children and Seniors, and Gilchrest is the CWCS's designee on the TIPC. Women and children are the populations most often targeted by traffickers.

According to the Polaris Project, a nationally recognized anti-trafficking clearinghouse that works with the FBI to track down traffickers, Connecticut's new law is the first in the country to require such hotel record-keeping and training.

"The passage of this act is a trailblazing move by Connecticut to systematically address both sex and labor trafficking in hotels," said Courtney Walsh, advisory services regional specialist for Polaris. "By focusing on training, public awareness, and stronger record keeping, the comprehensive legislation will empower staff and the general public to take action if they suspect trafficking in this frequently-reported venue."

And United States Attorney Deirdre M. Daly, too, recognized the potential impact of Connecticut's new laws.

"I applaud the State of Connecticut for strengthening the state's human trafficking laws," Daly said. "Requiring hotels and motels to maintain records and to train their employees to recognize the signs of human trafficking is another step forward in combatting this depraved crime."

Private philanthropic groups are taking notice of Connecticut work, too. Over the coming year, with the support of a \$5,000 grant from the Michael Bolton Charities, the Connecticut Trafficking in Persons Council will embark on a project to determine what labor and sex trafficking looks like across Connecticut and begin to create a roadmap to effectively address and prevent human trafficking. This project will allow TIPC to build on Connecticut's strengths in a data-informed manner as a community, more comprehensively and more collaboratively.

"I am so pleased to be able to help this remarkable organization prevent the scourge of trafficking," said Michael Bolton, the Grammy award-winning singer/songwriter and human rights activist, who serves as founder and chairman of the Connecticut-based Michael Bolton Charities. "Our charity is providing funds to do a statewide assessment, because data is critical to carrying out effective solutions. We know, for example, that in Connecticut, the state's Department of Children and Families has received more than 400 referrals for youth identified at risk of being victims of human trafficking—and those are just the children. We're supporting the TIPC's efforts to round out this picture of trafficking, so law enforcement and policy people will know where to put their best efforts."

Members of the General Assembly's Judiciary Committee also weighed in on the significance of the law soon to take effect:

"I am pleased we were able to once again work together as a bipartisan legislature to strengthen Connecticut laws against human trafficking, protect the vulnerable and at-risk and increase penalties for those convicted of perpetuating such heinous crimes," said Rep. Rosa Rebimbas, ranking member of Judiciary.

And, Judiciary Committee member Rep. Caroline Simmons said, "I am pleased to have been able to work on this important legislation that aims to prevent human trafficking in Connecticut. Over the past two years, nearly 400 human trafficking cases were referred to DCF -- we have to do more as a state to stand up against this horrific activity and this is a significant start. Denying someone's personal freedom and compromising their dignity is one of the worst immoral human behaviors."

Significant sections of the new law, which the PCSW was instrumental in passing this past legislative session, include:

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2016*) The operator of each hotel, motel, inn or similar lodging shall maintain a record-keeping system of all guest transactions and receipts. All records maintained pursuant to this section shall be retained by the operator of such hotel,

motel, inn or similar lodging for not less than six months from the date of creation of the record.

Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2016*) The Commissioner of Children and Families and the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection shall consult with state and national hotel and lodging associations to recommend an educational training program and refresher training program for the accurate and prompt identification and reporting of suspected human trafficking. The training program shall include a video presentation, developed and approved by said commissioners, that offers guidance to employees of hotels, motels, inns and similar lodgings on the (1) recognition of potential victims of human trafficking, and (2) activities commonly associated with human trafficking.

Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2016*) The operator of each hotel, motel, inn or similar lodging shall ensure that each employee of such hotel, motel, inn or similar lodging receive training at the time of hire on the (1) recognition of potential victims of human trafficking, and (2) activities commonly associated with human trafficking. In addition, such operator shall conduct ongoing awareness campaigns for employees on the activities commonly associated with human trafficking. On or before October 1, 2017, and annually thereafter, the operator of each hotel, motel, inn or similar lodging shall certify that each employee of any such establishment has received the training prescribed by this section in each employee's personnel file.