



Spotlight on Human Trafficking and Super Bowl XLVI

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A great deal of effort went into preparations for the big event that took place in Indianapolis this past February. Much was done to create a welcoming environment for those who spent time in our city. Hoosier hospitality was in full force for the week of festivities. However, there was one group that many Hoosiers were not extending their well know hospitality to...human traffickers. Every year it is estimated that thousands of persons are victims of human trafficking in the United States and an estimated 12.3 million worldwide (US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2010) Large events such as the Super Bowl present an opportunity for traffickers to set up shop and exploit adults and children against their will for the purposes of selling them into forced sex or labor. Human trafficking is one of the world's most lucrative crimes. The United Nations estimates that 32 billion dollars is earned each year by traffickers across the globe. (International Labor Office, A Global Alliance Against Forced Labor, Global Report Under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, (Geneva: 2005), 55, http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_081882/lang--en/index.htm (accessed December 9, 2010).

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An event of the magnitude of the Super Bowl promises an occasion for criminals to cash in on the lives of the most vulnerable.

In 2005 the US Attorney's Office of the Southern District of Indiana convened local, state and federal law enforcement partners as well as local victim services providers to form one of 42 Human Trafficking Task Forces in the U.S. Since that time the Indiana Protection of Abused and Trafficked Persons (IPATH) Task Force has been working to educate the community, prosecute traffickers and protect and assist victims. In 2006 Indiana law makers passed the first trafficking law in Indiana history (IC 35-42-3.5). While the law demonstrated a strong effort to both provide protection to victims and hold traffickers responsible it did not go far enough.

In anticipation of the Super Bowl, the IPATH Task Force and numerous community partners prepared for nearly a year to lay the ground work for a well orchestrated plan to respond to any increase in trafficking that might occur with the numbers of people coming to our city. Multiple efforts were employed with the hopes of deterring traffickers from coming to Indianapolis and training community members in the dynamics and signs of trafficking, so that victims might be identified and assisted and traffickers arrested and prosecuted. Thousands of persons were trained including taxi drivers, hospitality workers, hotel and club staff as well as many other persons who might encounter victims and their traffickers. One major effort undertaken by task force members and led by the Indiana Attorney General's office was to strengthen the Indiana Human Trafficking law. Just prior to the big game the Indiana Senate passed Senate bill 4 and Governor Daniels signed it into law. The bill clarifies that force, fraud or coercion are not necessary elements in the sex trafficking of minors. This revision more closely models the Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act. Penalties for trafficking were also increased as well as several other elements.

The Super Bowl has come and gone and all accounts say that the city was a successful host. But just because the party is over does not mean that our efforts to combat human trafficking should end. Indianapolis welcomes people from all over the world every year for a variety of major events that could just as easily provide an increased opportunity for human traffickers to do business. In addition, experience tells us that even in the Circle City trafficking goes on every day whether there is a big game or not. As citizens of this great city we need to take a stand against human trafficking and make Indianapolis an inhospitable place for those who enslave others for their own gain.

For more information on how you can join the effort to end trafficking contact:

www.indianaagainstrafficking.org