

Human trafficking is a clandestine crime that thrives on secrecy and the social and physical isolation of the victims. As a result, identifying victims, traffickers, and networks used by traffickers is extremely challenging. One tool for bringing human trafficking into the open and for connecting victims to assistance is through the use of a hotline. A hotline can be used to provide referrals for victims seeking assistance, a mechanism to provide tips to law enforcement, and to provide general information about human trafficking to the public.

Current Policy

At the federal level, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) is a national hotline funded by the Department of Health and Human Services. Since 2007, the NHTRC has been operated by Polaris. The NHTRC provides: service referrals, tips to law enforcement, information to the public, and training and technical assistance. In the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008, Congress mandated that the NHTRC number be included in a pamphlet given to every nonimmigrant visa holder entering the United States. Several federal agencies also publicize the hotline.

At the state level, thirty states require or encourage a hotline number to be posted or promoted within the state. The majority of these states have opted to post the NHTRC hotline number throughout the state. A small number of states have opted to use a state-based hotline.

The locations where a hotline number must be posted vary across the states. There are some common venues where human trafficking occurs across the country and many of the hotline posting laws focus on those venues which include:

- Places of transit: truck stops, bus stations, train stations, air ports, and rest stops; and
- Places where trafficking victims are present: hotels, motels, strip clubs, bars, and farms.

In 2013, the Uniform Law Commission (ULC) released a Uniform Act on the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking (Uniform Act) and included a section on posting of the NHTRC. The Uniform Act may influence state legislators to adopt hotline posting legislation in their state or to expand upon existing law.

Suggested Language from Uniform Act on the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking (Uniform Act)

Section 20. Display of Public-Awareness Sign; Penalty for Failure to Display

- (a) The [state transportation department] shall display a public-awareness sign [created under Section 19(c)(4)] in every transportation station, rest area, and welcome center in the state which is open to the public.
- (b) A public awareness sign [created under Section 19(c)(4)] shall be displayed at the following locations in a place that is clearly conspicuous and visible to employees:
 - (1) A strip club and other sexually-oriented business;
 - (2) An entity found to be a nuisance for prostitution under [cite state nuisance law];
 - (3) A job recruitment center;
 - (4) A hospital; and
 - (5) An emergency care provider.
- (c) The [state labor department] shall impose a [fine] of \$[300] per violation on an employer that knowingly fails to comply with subsection (b). The [fine] is the exclusive remedy for failure to comply.

For additional information or assistance, please contact Polaris at policy@polarisproject.org