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**COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**



Pete Ricketts, Governor

Human Trafficking Task Force

Dear Senator,

The Task Force on Human Trafficking (Governor's Task Force) is required by Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-1430(13) to issue a report to the Clerk of the Legislature its recommendations for legislation. This letter is in fulfillment of that requirement.

The Task Force was created by LB 1145(2012) by former Senator Amanda McGill. The task force duties are enumerated in Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-1430 – 81-1431, and include establishing training in the issues surrounding human trafficking, and how the training should be provided for law enforcement agencies, public defenders, judges, detention center staff, and other relevant officials who potentially would be working with human trafficking perpetrators or victims. The task force is also required to study the extent of human trafficking in Nebraska, research and recommend a model of rehabilitative services for victims of human trafficking, and to work with the Department of Labor to develop or select informational posters to be placed around the state which must include the National Human Trafficking Resources Center Hotline, to help raise awareness of human trafficking and provide a number for victims to call to get assistance. The task force has accomplished everything they were statutorily obligated to do. The Task Force membership has indicated through acclamation they no longer desire to meet as virtually all the members on our Task Force are also working on the Attorney General's Task Force (the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force).

Under the leadership of Attorney General Doug Peterson, additional legislation was passed in 2015. LB 294, known as the Human Trafficking Victims Civil Remedy Act, expanded the work against human trafficking by establishing a civil cause of action for victims of human trafficking against their perpetrators and allowed for an award of monetary damages, tasking the Nebraska Foster Care Review Office with collection of information related to child trafficking victims in Nebraska, reorganizing the offenses and penalties involved with trafficking by creating a general prohibition and penalty for human trafficking and increasing the penalties for solicitation of prostitution, pandering, and keeping a house of prostitution. LB 294 also created the statutory authority necessary to attack the profits of traffickers by creating a tightly controlled forfeiture provision, and created the Human Trafficking Victim Assistance Fund to support the care, treatment, and other services necessary for victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of a child.

Darrell Fisher, Executive Director

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As the work of the Attorney General has moved forward, a task force within that office has been established, consisting of an advisory group as well as several working groups including service providers, law enforcement, and community partners. This task force, in collaboration with the Salvation Army, has also been awarded a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, specifically for law enforcement agencies and victim service providers, in the amount of \$1.5 million dollars. As stated above, virtually all of the members on our Task Force are currently working in the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force (NHTTF). A summary of the NHTTF follows and is respectfully submitted by Glen Parks, Assistant Attorney General and NHTTF Coordinator at the Attorney General's Office:

Legislative advancement. During the 2017 Legislative session, LB 289 was passed by the Unicameral with overwhelming support (48-0) and the Governor signed it into law. This bill sponsored by Senator Patty Pansing-Brooks significantly increased penalties for human trafficking, clarified the nature of sex trafficking, and added the ability to prosecute sex buyers as traffickers when the one bought is a minor or a trafficking victim.

Training and expanded awareness. The Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force (NHTTF) conducted numerous trainings since the last report, including a seven-hour presentation on labor trafficking for law enforcement and service providers. Labor trafficking training occurred in seven cities across Nebraska. Approximately 350 professionals were trained. The Task Force held additional trainings, some of these were awareness-raising for the general public and others were more in-depth, specialty training for law enforcement, service providers, or medical professionals.

Prevalence of human trafficking in state. An NHTTF partner, Creighton University's Human Trafficking Initiative (CU-HTI), added a great deal of intel to law enforcement's quest to find and stop human trafficking in Nebraska. Because of its work, the NHTTF has a heightened understanding of the extent and type of online sex trafficking occurring in Nebraska. CU-HTI has also developed tools to find high-risk online ads and communicate them to law enforcement in real time. Furthermore, as law enforcement operations and investigations increase, it is giving rise to a more complete understanding of what types of human trafficking occur in Nebraska and how best to address it.

Scope of prevention efforts. The NHTTF has formed five regional teams covering the state to coordinate human trafficking investigations and operations. Each regional team is active, meeting regularly, planning and conducting pro-active operations, and developing tools locally to best address human trafficking. Presently, law enforcement teams have over a dozen open cases of human trafficking across the state. Furthermore, state and federal law enforcement agencies have a protocol with the national hotline to field and respond to reported tips. This system is working effectively.

Model of rehabilitative services. In its commitment to best practices, NHTTF is developing a guide for service providers. The Task Force is also working to develop a network of services in each region of the state, a forum to coordinate and assist all who do or can provide service to victims of human trafficking.

Based on the work that is being undertaken by the Attorney General's office, and the work that has been accomplished by the Governor's Human Trafficking Task Force, a discussion concerning the future of the Governor's Human Trafficking Task Force was held at our most recent meeting held on October 20, 2016. The task force feels our duties and responsibilities have been completed, and recommends the legislature sunset this task force, and transfer any remaining duties and responsibilities for combating human trafficking to the Attorney General's office. Many members of the Governor's Task Force are working on the Attorney General's task force, and we feel that a duplication of these efforts is unnecessary. Plans are being made to introduce legislation in the 106th Nebraska Legislature to either have the sun set on the Task Force on Human Trafficking, or to have §81-1430 – 81-1431 repealed as a duplication of services.

We would welcome any concerns or questions you may have. Please contact Stan Clouse, Chair of the Task Force on Human Trafficking or Darrell Fisher, Executive Director of the Crime Commission if you have any issues you would like to discuss with the task force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stan Clouse".

Stan Clouse, Chair
Task Force on Human Trafficking