

Transcript

Thank you and good morning everybody, we'll get started in one moment; Attorney General Martha Coakley. Several members of the legislature, they start session at 11:00, so you may see some of them leaving, we're going to try to accommodate them and get started, but if they leave, that is the reason, they have important business across the street.

Attorney General Martha Coakley, I want to acknowledge the folks that are behind me that you are going to hear from, Senator Mark Montigny who has been working on this issue for six years now; House Judiciary Committee Chairman Eugene O'Flaherty, who has agreed to be a co-sponsor on the House side; you will hear from Audrey Porter, who is an assistant director of My Life My Choice, who has experience and will explain why this bill is important; my friend and colleague, Sam Sutter, who is the Bristol District Attorney and the president of the Mass. District Attorney's Association; my other friend and colleague Dan Conley, who is the Suffolk District Attorney and who has been a leader in Boston with Commissioner Ed Davis and the T-Police and other police around this issue and has a bill that we will talk about that is an important companion to this, the Safe Harbor Bill; Ed Davis, Boston Police Commissioner; and Rick Brown, who is the president of the State Police Association of Massachusetts. We also have with us in support of this bill today State Representative Byron Rushing, Representative Dan Winslow, Representative Kay Kahn, Representative Laurie Ehrlich, Northboro Police Chief Mark Leyhe President of the Massachusetts Police Chief's Association, New Bedford Chief of Police Ron Teachman, Chelsea Police Chief Brian Kise, Loretta Lilius who is assistant to District Attorney Gerry Leone who is also in support of this bill, Wellesley Police Chief Terrence Cunningham, Lisa Goldback Grace from My Life My Choice, Laurie Minors the President of Community Voices, and members of the Boston Human Trafficking Task Force and Massachusetts Jobs for Justice, Edwin Argetta.

I first of all want to thank Senator Montigny and Chairman O'Flaherty for being here today but also for their tremendous work and our work going forward on this bill. As you can see, we have support from law enforcement, from victim advocates, from labor on *Act Relative to the Commercial Exploitation of People*. Massachusetts is only one of only five states that does not have a human trafficking felony bill, and it's about time that we changed that. This bill will be an important first step to combat what is an egregious crime of human trafficking for sexual servitude and labor. This is a public safety issue and it is a human rights issue and this is an incredibly important first step.

People of every background are exploited on a daily basis, not only in terms of internationally, not only in this country, but also right here in Massachusetts, in our backyard and this bill sends the message that human trafficking is unacceptable and it gives law enforcement the tools so that we can suppress it and hold those accountable that would make a profit of peoples' expense. It is the second largest and fastest growing illegal industry, and as you can imagine, competing with drug trafficking, we have over 27 million people we believe are trafficked internationally, including domestically, a 32 billion dollar industry, and if you think about that for a minute, if you sell drugs or guns,

they are gone, you're going to need a new supply. If you traffic a young woman on the street you can send her out, make money, and do the same thing the next day. So you can see why it is attractive, why it's lucrative; I saw myself as head of the Child Abuse Unit and later as Middlesex District Attorney, as I know my colleagues see everyday; young women who are brought in, often as defendants because they are selling themselves on the street; they are facing criminal charges but we have come to see for many if not most of these young people, they are victims first. And Dan Connolly is going to talk about the bill that he has filed to address that.

It is incredibly important, and you will hear shortly from Audrey Porter, to understand how this exploitation works; how people are pulled in at 13, 14, 15, and that we do not have the tools here in Massachusetts to address, in a comprehensive way, what we need to do. This statute gives us enforcement tools and it also gives us the ability to look at providing the appropriate programs and for young people, particularly pulled into the life and will help us educate the public of what we need to do to stop human trafficking.

We know, not only from our work in the streets, as the police will tell you, as the DAs know from the courts, but we know from our latest hearings on Craigslist, that as this has been a huge problem it is facilitated by technology and by website and it is right, as I said, in our backyards and it has to be addressed now.

We want to do that on three fronts: Accountability, for traffickers. Those individuals who make money off the exploitation of people. We need to address how and how we fund the kinds of programs and services for victims to prevent this and more importantly, to get them back out of the life that they have been pulled in, and we need to, in this bill, address the demand for services. We've looked at a bill with penalties for people who engage in sex, commonly known as Johns.

This legislation creates the crime of trafficking for persons for sexual servitude, which has a penalty of no more than 20 years in state prison. It creates a crime of trafficking persons for forced labor, has a penalty of no more than 15 years in state prison. And imposes higher penalties for those who victimize people under 18 and imposes a minimum mandatory sentence of 10 years for second or subsequent offenses and allows for forfeiture to the Commonwealth and enables some of the funds to be paid to victims for restitution in the prosecution of these crimes.

It also creates an inter-agency taskforce to study the data and to make sure that we know who is being trafficked and how we can best address that. We know from other instances that information sharing and criminal justice for juveniles has been incredibly successful, we need to do that here to address this problem. We need to be able to fine the remedies for those who are pulled into this life and we need to increase the penalties for Johns.

Shortly, Dan Conley is going to talk to you about the concept of safe harbor for these young women and men who most often come to our attention as defendants, but we think we have a better and more successful way to address how they are pulled into the life. And I want to indicate today that we have already, and intend to within our own office,

through an Attorney General's strike force, within our own departments, our Labor division, our Executive division, our Criminal division as well as other parts of the office to make sure that we are prepared here in a multidisciplinary way, when this bill passes to work with an interagency task force that will address this problem head on. We need that multidisciplinary in order to be successful.

I am grateful for the folks that are here supporting it. We can and will get support in the public for this, we know this has been under the radar, but it's time to make sure that we shine a spotlight on this crime. It's my pleasure now to introduce a gentleman that has been working on this for six years, addressing the issue and setting the foundation for today's ability to have the public recognize and have the legislature recognize that it is time to move forward on a bill that creates a felony for human trafficking, Mark Montigny.

Sen. Montigny:

Thank you. I know that folks from the media are used to us at the podium going back and forth thanking each other before we actually say what we have to say, but I want to send that right back to the District Attorney. Six years ago, a long time, particularly when there's so many victims out there being exploited every day, but six years ago when there were just a few of us that thought that this was urgent, Martha Coakley was there and I greatly appreciate it on a very personal level, Attorney General. The issue is difficult. We in society, if you think about it, in some ways particularly through the movie world and Hollywood, we actually glorify the pimp and blame the prostitute, who is often the victim. What I mean by that, is if you think about it, the pimp somehow is depicted as the person who is protecting this person from the evils of her clients or the evils of the street. In many cases, first of all, how inaccurate that is, but in many cases, this victim has been trafficked either domestically, literally tens of thousands every year or international again, thousands and thousands of victims taken from their country, passport confiscated, family back home threatened. They're given no choice and it is absolutely modern day slavery. Nothing less. In fact, one of the reasons that I feel so strongly that not enough has been done is the lack of understanding. As Martha said, it is below the radar screen because when you mention it to most people, they say slavery goes on somewhere else. That happens over there. When in fact, it is happening here every day and it isn't just sexual servitude in the wealthy suburbs around this town, we've had some of the most egregious cases where people are literally held captive and there's a source of pride in the neighborhood. I have nanny so and so from exotic country and she doesn't speak the language and she can't tell you that she is and I stress she because its usually women or children are being held captive. They are abused and in many cases that includes rape, it includes, being drugged, it includes torture. I hear this first hand from law enforcement, we've heard it first hand from victims. This is not exaggeration. In fact, at that first forum that the Attorney General was so kind to attend and so passionate in her participation, one of the victims said to us "it is actually a crime or a fate and therefore a crime worse than death because we have our spirit completely destroyed and then we have to go out and do it the next day for the monster that destroys our spirit and then we have to even if we are able to break away, we have to go through the mundane things in life because the social service net isn't there, the housing net isn't there." So what I'm asking today we do a lot

of things on Beacon Hill. We have a very difficult budget to look at. We've already talked about lots of priorities for the year. The Senate did pass a very comprehensive bill, one of the most comprehensive bills in the country last year. I think this year with strong support, you see the House members here working just as diligently. I think we can get it done this year and I think what people should recognize and it should be printed and written about and talked about. The main reason why so many are still exploited is: 1. We don't have this law but 2. We don't have the awareness in the neighborhoods and the support with local law enforcement. We've had great support from the US Attorney, the Justice Department, the FBI, all of the international organizations, but ultimately most of the crimes occur at the local level. So if you don't have proper resources and training and if people in the neighborhood don't know that that woman that's being exploited and forced into slavery and labor is in fact just that, a victim, it's not reported. If you look at every runaway on the streets as simply some delinquent child who made bad choices, then they continue to be exploited and ultimately in many cases they die over time. You know anybody who has dealt with victims knows. Let me conclude by saying that, the folks that are doing this are some of the worst criminals that anybody behind me in uniform will encounter and the Attorney General is correct--it's one of the most lucrative and organized crimes in the country. It's one of the most successful ways to launder money. Think about it. We already have very strict laws for selling guns and drugs, and we have law enforcement doing a great job taking those people off the streets. We don't have the kind of law for exploiting and selling and torturing and destroying and raping human beings. It's just mind blowing to me and even if that isn't enough, to make you feel discouraged, it's a multi-billion dollar a year business. What's happening now is organized gangs, both young and established, look at it and say "why should I traffic in guns? Why should I traffic in drugs when I can do this over and over and over and if I get caught, most likely they'll blame the woman who is out actually selling." She's afraid of the pimp who is a human trafficker and a slave holder, frankly. The woman goes back out on the street with a slap on the wrist and ultimately, she's destroyed. I hope we pass a very, very comprehensive bill this year. It isn't as easy as stronger penalties, that's certainly as important and we should put these folks in jail for a long, long, long time, but we also have to look at the victim as a whole person and that means housing and human services and health care. It means working with T and U Visas. In many cases these women have been snatched from their countries and brought back here. Their families have been threatened. Again, as I said earlier, not only do we treat the woman or the child prostitute, and I'm stressing that. There is a lot of labor exploitation that should be talked about also. I'm stressing sexual servitude today. But what ends up happening is they can't go back home and there are some folks who think that they are here illegally by choice because they're trying to take advantage of this wonderful country and therefore they should be shipped out. Many of these folks if they cooperate and put people in jail, will be executed when they arrive back home in the country they were snatched from. These are not exaggerations, we've been told first hand how close by. An encounter I had, I was in a backpacking trip in Cambodia years ago and met with some folks that were doing great work on human trafficking and I expected them to tell me all of the things wrong in Cambodia and they were very, very critical of the US saying if we didn't have traffickers that were bringing folks to your country where they were simply being treated as prostitutes or we didn't have sex tourists that were coming over here mainly from Europe

but also from the US and going home with no penalty, we wouldn't have the problem that we have. I expected them to tell me how I could help and perhaps offer them some advice, and I got a lecture about what we should be doing here. I'm sorry to have gone on and on and on but in six years, the only thing that's happened is more and more states have done the right thing. Literally hundreds of victims have been diminished if not destroyed. So I greatly appreciate, more than anything, the folks behind me at this podium who working to make it happen, particularly the Attorney General whose been there from day 1 and people like Karen McLaughlin from the Boston Police who have never left our side on this despite some frustrating times. Thank you very much Attorney General. I'm sorry I wasn't looking at my heavy agenda here. I want to introduce my lead partner on this legislation on the House side, and that's the House Judiciary Chairman, Eugene O'Flaherty.

Thank you very much. Good morning everybody. I want to first also congratulate our Attorney General on her swearing in yesterday. I look forward to once again working with her as the top law enforcement official here in the Commonwealth of MA and working with us in the legislature and making sure that issues like we're talking about today are brought to our attention and certainly working cooperatively to get them to make sure that we close those loopholes in the law. I'm here today as one of the sponsors, but also there's a two people from my district are here, Obviously Boston Police Commissioner Davis because I represent the Charlestown neighborhood, but also Chelsea Police Chief Brian Kyes is here. Chelsea which is a part of my district has the largest immigrant population in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and over the years many incidences have been brought to our attention where that immigrant community in particular is exploited. It's not only in the area that we're talking about today. It's in financial issues, it's in immigrant issues, but today is probably the most egregious issue that has been brought to my attention by the people that work in law enforcement in my district. That is the exploitation of children of young women, and people that engage in this profession, if you wanna call it that, certainly they do amongst themselves. But it's time for us to make sure that our Attorney General, the men and women in uniform that are on the front lines with these issues every single day, have the tools that they need to effectively prosecute those that are responsible and also provide care, rehabilitation and services for those that we know are abused in this entire process. Behind me are men and women that I serve with in the legislature. We will make sure that we continue to educate our members on this particular issue, we'll make sure to bring this issue to their attention as this session unfolds. As the Senator mentioned, there are many issues that will dominate our agenda this year. But certainly in terms of good and sound policy, giving law enforcement the tools they need, this issue needs to be paramount and certainly we will do our very best to make sure that that happens. I want to close by thanking the Attorney General once again for sponsoring this legislation, for making sure that this issue does not go away, and most importantly for working every day to make sure that we in the legislature are also providing them and her and all the people that work for her, the tools that they need to make our Commonwealth a safer place for all. Thank you.

It's my pleasure to introduce Audrey Porter, who is an Assistant Director of My Life My Choice, but also is here to speak from experience. She was kind enough to educate us on

our Craig's List hearing and we're delighted to have her with us today.

Thank you, hi. I'm so nervous and it's like I don't want to be nervous on something so important. I actually come from the era of the combat zone. Was introduced to the combat zone by a guy that I thought was my boyfriend at a very early age, ended up not getting out until age thirty. Some of the experiences I had were rapes, beatings. You know one of the things that stand out the most for me is you know when I think about this whole thing, I think about if it were not for the pimps or the johns, how easy this thing would be to get rid of. But they exist and they are the ones who never get punished. You know, my own experience over and over again, being pulled over in cars, and I was the one to get arrested. Just letting the guys go. I work with youth that are being exploited right here in this community and they are being tortured. They're being held in basements, forced to take pictures, with the promise of a better life and it's usually in this area it's the kids that are in the system, a lot of the inner city children, the poor kids with the promise of I'll make you a star. The work that I do, I made it out, but I'm constantly reminded through the children today. I think what is so scary today is that when I was out there, I was visible, like the police did know who I was, but today, it is with the Internet, our children are being put in a hotel room. They taking these pictures, put in a hotel room and no one is there. They have no way of anyone finding them. It is a real, real scary situation. I'm really excited that folks are really starting to take a look at this. I need to say too like for the media, I think one of the reasons I really get really disturbed is that a lot of times I speak and I talk about this issue and then I open the paper and I always see things like next to my picture, former prostitute. So one of the things that I want to clear up is that, I am a survivor of the commercial sex industry. Thank you. I need to say that there is more to me than that. Like today, I really try and help the youth I work closely with, the children and I think that the media has to be careful because we want our children to be able to step forward and talk about what is happening to them, but if they open newspapers and see things like former prostitute, you know what I mean, those types of things. A lot of time that will make them afraid to come forward. Aside from the fact that they are afraid for their lives. I am an advocate and I will always advocate for these children. I think about being in Las Vegas and I did a training for the juvenile court and I remember the judge there saying that they arrest 300 children a year in Las Vegas and 80% of them are not even from Las Vegas, where pimps have trafficked our children. If you take a child that is from the backwoods of Maine and you bring that child to New York City, Las Vegas, it is no different than the child who has been brought here from a foreign country that knows no one, only the pimp. That's their only source, their only contact. So it is no different. The fear is still the same. There's nothing glamorous about children selling their bodies, having to sell their bodies, over and over and over again to these strange men who are taking advantage of our children. It really, really breaks my heart and I will continue to fight for more Johns to be arrested. Pimps need to be charged. I read a story, I couldn't even read the whole story, about a week or so ago, about a 16 year old that was arrested--- I mean the pimp was arrested, a couple or something, and they dropped the charges because they said she had been prostituting before she met him. A 16 year old child. If I had to guess the story, I would guess that he is the one that got caught and the first pimp got away. So I will continue to advocate. Again, I just want to close with, it could happen to your children. With the internet it does not matter. I

remember thinking, my daughter's home, she's safe, she's online and I live in the suburbs. Pimps are recruiting our children from all over. So I will continue to advocate for these children. And again, I'm just going to end with that I'm grateful that I made it out, that I survived the commercial sex industry. Thank you.

Thank you Audrey. Now District Attorney Sam Sutter has the envious position of following Audrey.

Audrey, thank you very much for that brave testimony. My colleague from Bristol County is correct that we do spend some time at these press conferences thanking one another, but I would like to thank Attorney General Coakley, Senator Montigny, Representative O'Flaherty, the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee on the House side, and my esteemed colleague from Suffolk County, Dan Connolly, for what clearly is their vision and their determination on this issue. What struck me most in my review of the legislation is to reiterate what the Attorney General said, Massachusetts is one of only five states in our country without human trafficking legislation. All of us believe very strongly that this needs to be corrected during this legislative session. Today is a wonderful gathering and a wonderful first step, but it's only the first step. What's going to be needed to is to continue this momentum. I've had my own experience with pushing very hard to get legislation passed. I think there's 3 ingredients. One is steady attention and some of that has to come from the media, persistence, and high energy. It's reassuring to know that we have two very strong forces in the legislature that are going to be leading the push during this legislative session to get this passed. I thank them and I thank all of you and let's get this done. Thank you.

Thank you, Sam. Dan Connolly.

Thank you Attorney General Coakley and Audrey thank you very much. I've heard Audrey speak several times. I don't know why she comes back and says I'm so nervous I'm glad that's over with. Terrific speaker—better and better every time. But you give tremendous testimony for the cause that we're all working so hard at. If anyone doubts the existence of human trafficking in Massachusetts, consider the case of Ryan Dundton. He was a pimp from Avon and he knew that while you can sell a drug only once, you can sell a teenage girl over and over again. Ryan Dundton called himself "Mr. Real." He even had the monica tattooed on the skin of a girl, he named Precious. Dundton had lured Precious into prostitution when she was just 16. He turned her out on Craig's List and the pages of the Boston Phoenix. By the time she came to our attention, she was 19 and showing the ropes to this pimp's latest acquisition, another 16 year old girl. Dundton approached this teenager in a bus station and he told her that she could make a lot of money if she worked for him. Within just a few days, he had taken her cell phone away and was driving her to cities and towns all around Boston to turn her out, just as he had done with Precious. Girls like Precious are exploited on the street, classified ads, and as Audrey said, online. Research has shown us that most of them enter prostitution in their early teens or younger. They've been pressured, coerced and even forced into a life that deprives them of choice and dignity. They're victims, not offenders. We're determined that the law ought to treat them as such. In Boston and in Suffolk County, our policy is to

terminate criminal charges against juveniles who are arrested and charged with sex for a fee. We refer to these young girls and to a lesser extent, but very real extent, young boys, who are arrested to social service agencies, to the children's advocacy center, the family justice center, and support to end exploitation now program. We focused our enforcement efforts on the pimps who exploit these children. I'm here to express my unconditional support for Attorney General Coakley's bill and I applaud the sentencing range, the possibility for restitution, and especially the demand side approach for enforcement. Today, the penalty for paying for sex with a child only applies if the exploited child is under the age of 14. The Attorney General's bill would raise that age to 18, providing for up to ten years in prison, for anyone who would buy or sell sex with a juvenile. Had this bill been in effect when Ryan Dundton was before the court, it would have covered the 16 year old girls that he was trafficking. Legislation like this sends a strong message to men like Ryan Dundton, but it should also send a message to men who buy sex from young girls. We're redefining the problem of human trafficking in Massachusetts and we're making explicit the role that Johns play in it. Prostitution is not a victimless crime, when it goes hand in hand with rape, violence, and lifelong trauma. The victims are real and this bill will protect them. Thank you all very much.

Ed.

Thank you Attorney General. ---Needs no introduction.

That's very kind of you. Good morning to everyone. I want to take a minute to thank the Attorney General and Senator Montigny and Chairman O'Flaherty on their leadership of this very important piece of legislation. I'm here joined by colleagues from across the state who lead police departments and by union leaders who are very much in support of this legislation. In the room here, is Sergeant Donna Gavin who runs our human trafficking unit in the Family Justice Center in the Boston Police Department. They work with this problem day in and day out. It fuels the gangs and some of their money that their making. We are focused intently on holding them accountable for this. I have a speech here that talks about the benefits of this bill, but you've heard about all that so I'm going to keep that speech in my pocket and I'm just going to tell you a couple of fast things. I made my first arrest of a pimp in 1982. I prosecuted a pimp federally in 1986, who was doing exactly what Audrey said, going up to Manchester and Lowell and recruiting girls from small towns around those cities, bringing those girls down into Boston, into New York, into Atlantic City, into Miami, and finally out to Las Vegas, Nevada to prostitute them. I've seen this happen. I've been personally involved with the families of these young girls who have been victimized. I am blown away that Massachusetts is one of only five states not to have this law in place. So I only have one question... Which legislator, who in the Senate, who in the House would vote against this bill? Thank you.

And finally, but not least certainly, our President of the State Police Association Rick Brown, and then we'll take some questions.

Thank you and I'm proud to be here and I'm proud that we supported Martha Coakley when she ran for reelection. The State Police Association of Massachusetts greatly appreciates her bringing this to the forefront and Senator Montigny and Representative O'Flaherty, thank you for your work on the hill to get this through. I'm not going to stand up here with a speech because Audrey, I guess, touched on anything you should possibly even know about this. As a member of the labor organization, the largest police organization in Massachusetts, we will do anything we can to help Representative O'Flaherty and Senator Montigny and the Attorney General's office to get this through. I know there are people in the Attorney General's office who have dealt with these issues before and by her putting this task force, she's going to get together with the Chiefs of Police in all these cities and towns, the State Police Association's Colonel, Colonel McGovern, and the District Attorney's Office. This will get done. If you have kids, like I do, and girls, like I do, and one living in New York City, and you don't think these things happen, they do. If you don't go to bed worrying about your kids every single night, when they're not in your home, and something like this can happen, you're wrong. It happens in this state, it happens all over the country, and it's about time that we're going to be the 46th state to put this on the books. Everybody in the community, any community, should be behind this. Our labor organization will be behind this to get this done. And I thank you Attorney General for bringing this out, the District Attorneys, the Chiefs of Police, and our legislative body, let's get this done. Thank you.