

Why I fight Human Trafficking.
by Diane Schrier

In 2011, a member stood up at the FL State Board Conference and said that people wanted to learn about human trafficking. As Florida State Public Policy Chair, it was my job to learn about it. I created directories of organizations involved with helping victims, attended conferences, found speakers and developed programs and power points to teach others. I found that as I was ignorant about all the tentacles, others were also. The more I learned, the more I realized that this was a cause I had to fight for.

Human trafficking is a multi-pronged business that when we discuss it, we are merely scratching the surface. It is a \$163 billion business with approximately 41 million victims, depending on definitions. Some countings do not include forced marriage. While labor and sexual trafficking are considered separate, one victim said they are interconnected. Labor globally takes up about 80% while sex trafficking is about 20%.

Every area focuses on different types of trafficking. In Northern Virginia, there are more technically savvy gangs, which leads to more national connections. There are racial divisions between the different types of gang activity and gang structure. There are strict vertical structures, that create efficient businesses, with the product being humans. Money is now flowing in legitimate areas which is contributing to the problem of stopping it.

The receivers of the product could stop it, but whether they are Johns or people wanting to pay a lower price for a product, self interest often rules