

TESTIMONY OF

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BEFORE

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ON

“Lessons Learned from Super Bowl Preparations: Preventing International Human Trafficking at
Major Sporting Events”

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Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the dedicated men and women of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to discuss our efforts to combat human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery; a crime that involves the exploitation of someone for the purposes of compelled labor or a commercial sex act through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Where a person younger than 18 is induced to perform a commercial sex act, it is a crime regardless of whether there is any force, fraud, or coercion. Every year, millions of men, women, and children worldwide—including in the United States—are victims of human trafficking. Victims are often lured with false promises of well-paying jobs or are manipulated by people they trust, and instead are forced or coerced into prostitution, domestic servitude, farm or factory labor, or other types of forced labor. Victims can be any age, citizenship, gender or immigration status. U.S. citizens, residents, visitors, or those without legal status can be victims of human trafficking. Unlike human smuggling, which requires the person to cross a border voluntarily in violation of immigration laws, human trafficking does not require the person to be transported from one destination to another.

Based on a study of data collected from 2002- 2011, the International Labor Organization estimated that 20.9 million people are victims of forced labor, or human trafficking, globally. They estimate that more than 20 percent of victims are forced into sexual exploitation, while others (68 percent) are forced into labor. An estimated 55 percent of trafficking victims are women and girls, and 45 percent are men and boys. Over one quarter of all trafficking victims are children.

DHS Blue Campaign

DHS shares responsibility with the U.S. Department of Justice for investigating human trafficking, arresting suspected traffickers and protecting victims. To address trafficking internationally and domestically, in 2010 DHS established the Blue Campaign. Fighting the hidden crime of human trafficking is a collaborative effort. DHS depends on strong partnerships with other federal agencies, foreign governments, international organizations, law enforcement, first responders, the faith-based community, non-profit organizations, the private sector, as well as our state, local, and tribal counterparts. DHS plays a key role in both the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking and the Senior Policy Operating Group, collaborating with other federal agencies to combat trafficking in persons.

The campaign marshals resources from across the nation and around the globe. The Blue Campaign focuses on increasing awareness, protecting victims and contributing to a robust criminal justice system. These activities are summarized below:

- *Prevention:* The Blue Campaign aims to help prevent future human trafficking cases by raising awareness on the issue and providing training. DHS conducts this public outreach both domestically and abroad. DHS has developed Public Service Announcements that are shared publically which help increase awareness about indicators of human trafficking to help the public identify victims.

- *Protection:* DHS provides immigration relief to foreign victims of human trafficking in the form of continued presence, T visas and U visas. The Department employs victim assistance specialists who work with law enforcement and non-governmental service providers and actively offers outreach materials informing potential victims of their rights and how to receive help.
- *Prosecution:* DHS trains federal, state, local and international law enforcement officials to recognize the indicators of human trafficking and to conduct successful human trafficking investigations. DHS initiates hundreds of investigations that lead to numerous arrests every year. In 2013, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) opened more than 1,000 cases—many with the help of the public—resulting in 816 convictions in cases with a nexus to trafficking, and identified over 330 trafficking victims.

Everyone has a role to play in combating human trafficking. Through the Blue Campaign, DHS will continue to focus on partnership collaborating with partners across government, law enforcement, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

DHS and its components work across their missions to combat human trafficking every day. As part of their efforts through the Blue Campaign, the DHS components produce training and informational videos and materials and public awareness campaigns, provide victim assistance and conduct investigative efforts, and establish partnerships, outreach, and online resources. The Blue Campaign coordinates and unites these initiatives with no direct appropriations, reflecting a belief that we are all more effective when we work collaboratively with our internal and external partners.

Blue Lightning Initiative

The Blue Lightning Initiative (BLI) is a voluntary training program initiated by DHS with the support and leadership of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Department of Transportation (DOT). Other collaborators on BLI include U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center, Transportation Security Administration, Federal Air Marshal Service, DOT's Federal Aviation Administration, nongovernmental organizations, and private industry.

The core of BLI is the partnership with the airline industry. Airline personnel can be helpful in identifying potential victims and report suspected human trafficking events to law enforcement. Beginning with ticket agents who routinely handle travel documents and question passengers as part of the check-in and boarding process and continuing with flight crews, these employees have extended time with travelers and opportunities for interactions. They are skilled observers, and with the appropriate training, they can be the frontline against trafficking.

BLI provides educational materials for U.S. commercial airline employees. Once trained, airline personnel become a force multiplier in the fight against trafficking, enabling DHS to interdict suspected traffickers and their victims. Even more importantly, this initiative removes human trafficking victims from harm while helping to disrupt a trafficking event. Participating airlines voluntarily instruct their employees using the BLI training module and associated materials. The

training may be integrated into airlines' initial or refresher training for flight attendants, customer service representatives, and other personnel. The training enables airline personnel to identify potential human traffickers and their victims, as well as the means to immediately report their suspicions to law enforcement through the BLI developed reporting mechanisms.

The BLI training includes a computer-based training module and printed materials, which provide a basic overview of trafficking, outline the indicators of human trafficking, and provide opportunities for individuals to test their knowledge and hone their surveillance skills. Printed materials also reinforce the training and list the ways to report human trafficking.

Training on how to identify human traffickers and their victims in the aviation context centers around the following indicators:

- Does the person have control of his or her own travel and identification documents?
- Does the person have freedom of movement and social interaction?
- Does the person have reasonable knowledge and means of reaching his or her final destination?
- Is the child traveler accompanied by his or her real parent/guardian?

Since the launch of BLI in June 2013, the Initiative currently has five participating airlines who have signed Memoranda of Understanding with DHS and DOT to use the BLI training materials. Several more agreements are in development, and thousands of aviation employees having already received training.

The BLI training materials include instruction on using the BLI reporting mechanisms such as in-flight notification via flight deck communications and coordination with the Federal Air Marshal Service. Airline personnel may report suspected human trafficking to federal law enforcement via ICE's toll-free Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Tip Line, an online tip form, an internationally available tip line number, or through flight deck communications. These real-time reporting mechanisms provide law enforcement officials with needed time to identify suspected victims or traffickers. It also allows CBP to research and analyze all information provided and coordinate an appropriate response before the plane arrives.

Since Blue Lightning was officially launched last year, CBP has received eight suspected human trafficking tips through the HSI Tip Line, which led to investigations regarding ongoing events. BLI tips have been received through each of the BLI reporting mechanisms including flight deck communications via the Domestic Events Network, the telephone tip lines and the online tip form.

DHS, CBP, and DOT continue to engage and develop agreements with additional airlines to expand participation in the Blue Lightning Initiative.

Conclusion

The DHS Blue Campaign unifies the DHS components and partnering federal agencies to more effectively combat human trafficking through enhanced public awareness, training, victim

assistance, and law enforcement investigations. By expanding collaboration with domestic and international governments, law enforcement, non-governmental organizations, and private sector industries, such as aviation, the Blue Campaign and BLI strive to bring those who exploit human lives to justice. As professional stewards of flight safety, aviation personnel are important partners in our government's efforts to end human trafficking and protect lives.