



Airline Ambassadors INTERNATIONAL

January 27, 2014

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Testimony to Committee on Foreign Affairs

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

It is documented that human trafficking activity increases around major sporting events and traffickers move their victims to these cities via all forms of transportation, including airlines.

Airline Ambassadors was established in 1996 as the only independent charity of the airline industry. We have been on the forefront of raising awareness on this issue since correctly identifying human trafficking on four different airlines in 2009. One of these cases led to the bust of a trafficking ring in Boston, involving 82 children.

We researched background on this crime and learned that the U.S. signed the Palermo Protocol in 2000 agreeing among other commitments, to stop the use of commercial airlines as transport for trafficking offenses. We were appalled to learn that no action had been implemented.

As flight attendants, we knew that airlines have infrastructure to provide training at virtually no additional cost during annual emergency procedure training for flight crew; and proper protocol could easily be established for ground personnel who would receive calls from pilots regarding potential trafficking situations.

Airline Ambassadors worked with Congressman Smith to provide a Briefing to Airlines in 2010, and as a result American Airlines issued a Bulletin to flight personnel and later incorporated the proper reporting protocol into crew manuals.

We worked closely with Homeland Security and Customs Border Protection to develop an industry specific training consistent with the Blue Campaign - Blue Lightning protocol. We have provided complimentary training's 20 times; starting in 2011 before the SuperBowl in Dallas, up to last week at Mineta San Jose International Airport, with Congressman Honda, as part of an effort to raise awareness in the Bay Area before SuperBowl 2016 in Santa Clara.

The DHS recommended protocol trains airline crew to pay attention to passengers boarding flights, be alert for children and who they are traveling with, as well as young people traveling alone, or anyone appearing to be nervous or unsure of their destination.

Flight attendants are taught to interact with passengers in a friendly, non-threatening manner, giving them opportunities to gather information, vastly increasing intelligence regarding potential trafficking situations. We teach flight attendants to be alert for indicators, but never to try and rescue a victim or display unusual concern or alarm. If they are uncomfortable with a situation, they are to report it to the cockpit with seat numbers of passengers involved. Pilots are to call Station Operation Command at the arrival airport, who are to call the DHS "Tip" Line to alert law enforcement for proper assessment.

Although positive momentum has begun with several airlines adopting the DHS Blue Lightning computer based training, the truth is that major airlines are still not adequately training staff by emphasizing this in classroom training.

The typical flight attendant glosses through on line trainings as fast as they can, and very little of the information covered is retained, unless emphasized by classroom instruction.

When I attended emergency procedure training in June 2013, there was one slide on this protocol in the on-line portion of the training, and it was not mentioned in the classroom. Afterwards our team visited Station Operation Command Center where flights all over the world were being monitored. We asked the supervisor, what he would do if a pilot reported a potential human trafficking situation and he said *"I would take no action, this situation is not a threat to aircraft security and therefore not in my realm of responsibility."*

This has to change. For the protocol to be effective; all employees must be aware of it and all employees must be trained. They must understand that human slavery is a reality and that their action or inaction, can save a life.

American Airlines has begun including a scenario in the classroom training for new hire flight attendants and this is a move in the right direction. Silver Airlines uses both the DHS computer training as well as the Airline Ambassadors training in the classroom. They have told us that the classroom training is more profound and touching.

Flight Attendants carry flashlights as part of their uniform requirement and we produced flashlight cards and wallet cards with key indicators and DHS TIP Line number for easy access which we will gladly make available to all U.S. based airlines. We will also continue providing Human Trafficking Awareness trainings at major airports as a public service. Our next training in Phoenix, home of SuperBowl 2015, with Innocents at Risk, has over 120 flight attendants committed, from AA, Alaska, Delta, Frontier, United, Southwest, USAIR, who are spending their own time and money to attend. Flight crew are hungry for knowledge and want to be a front line of defense in this horrific crime,

Airline Ambassadors also hosted a meeting in late 2013 with every major flight attendant and pilot union, representing over 100,000 flight personnel, and received huge support on this issue. In the words of Laura Glading, President of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants:

"We are committed not only to preparing our membership to recognize and report suspected instances of human trafficking, but also to raise public awareness of the problem. Flight attendants have thwarted these criminals in the past, but putting an end to human trafficking will require a coordinated and sustained effort as well the commitment of the entire transportation industry."