



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Ralph Norman

Joint Investigations & Oversight and Research & Technology Subcommittee Hearing

The Role of Technology in Countering Trafficking in Persons

July 28, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Foster, and Chairwoman Stevens. And thank you to our witnesses for your participation today in this joint subcommittee hearing.

I am looking forward to learning from our expert witnesses about how technology is being leveraged to combat human trafficking and what tools are needed to tackle it.

Human trafficking is a heinous crime that unfortunately impacts all countries. Experts estimate that there are approximately 25 million victims of human trafficking around the world, generating roughly \$150 billion in illegal profits annually for criminal organizations, terrorists, and rogue nations.

The Internet makes it easy for traffickers to exploit victims online and abuse technology to advance their criminal enterprises. On the other hand, technology can also be used for prevention, prosecution, and the protection of victims and survivors.

The United States is leading the charge to eradicate human trafficking. The Trump Administration has made it a priority to confront human trafficking head on using available resources to end this horrendous crime once and for all. In 2018, President Trump became the first sitting president to attend a meeting of the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons since it was created in 2000.

The President's recent Executive Order on Combating Human Trafficking and Online Child Exploitation in the United States establishes a comprehensive and coordinated response to preventing and countering human trafficking on U.S. soil.

It is imperative that we do not turn a blind eye to human trafficking in our own communities and work together to address and end this crime for good. I again want to thank the witnesses for taking the time to share your expertise with us today.

I yield back the balance of my time.