



Date: October 8, 2015

To: Mayor Bell and members of Council

From: Councilmember Eddie Davis
Sherri Zann Rosenthal, Committee Coordinator, Durham-Orange
Women Attorneys' Child Trafficking Committee

Subject: DOWA Report: "Child Sex Trafficking in Durham:
Calling the Community to a Coordinated Response"

Executive Summary

For the past year, the Durham-Orange Women Attorneys' Sex Trafficking Committee has been conducting interviews with representatives of various Durham agencies to understand our community's current response to child sex trafficking, and has been in conversation with Councilmember Davis on the issue. Our report is attached.

Each year, as many as 100,000-300,000 American children are at risk of being trafficked for commercial sex in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Child sex trafficking is the fastest growing business of organized crime and the third largest criminal enterprise in the world, exceeded only by illegal drug transactions and trading illegal firearms, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

It comes as a shock to most people to think that this is happening in Durham, North Carolina and its cities near interstate highways, including Durham, harbor significant levels of child sex trafficking. While numbers are difficult to come by—in part because there has been no systematic effort in Durham to identify those trafficked—we know that child sex trafficking is happening here, as it is in all the major North Carolina cities.

We recommend that a county-wide Task Force on Child Sex Trafficking be convened and directed to create a Durham Response Protocol on Child Sex Trafficking, based on the Washington State Protocol. The goal is to achieve a systematic, institutionalized and coordinated response which interrupts the business of child sex trafficking and provides child-centered support to those who have been trafficked.

Recommendation

The DOWA Child Trafficking Committee respectfully requests that City Council adopt a resolution on child sex trafficking which: endorses the creation of a county-wide Task Force on Child Sex Trafficking; urges that all Durham agencies which have contact with youth and the prosecution of sex crimes participate in the Task Force; and directs the Task Force to create a Durham Response Protocol on Child Sex Trafficking. A proposed resolution is attached for the Council's consideration.

Attachments: Proposed Resolution, Report of the DOWA Sex Trafficking Committee.