



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## ***New York Press* No Longer Marketing Arm for Prostitution/Trafficking Industry**

### **New Owner Manhattan Media Committed to NOW-NYC's Trafficking Free, NYC! Campaign**

New York, New York - Under the new ownership of Manhattan Media, *New York Press*, a weekly publication, will be free of ads that advertise illegal massage parlors and blatant ads promoting prostitution. Manhattan Media initially will take a financial hit by dropping sex ads that have made up a sizable percentage of *New York Press* sales, but the long-term growth prospects for this widely-circulated newspaper dramatically increase as it is remade into a reputable publication.

"Tom Allon is a trailblazer," said Sonia Ossorio, President of the National Organization for Women in New York City. "He sees the future of the newsprint business, and that future isn't reliant on the fast, cheap money of the prostitution industry. With the increased public awareness of global trafficking of women and girls, including American teenagers, advertisers and readers find newspapers loaded with explicit content and photos of half-naked women just not acceptable. Not something they want in their reception room or on the coffee table."

Today, trafficking human beings for sexual exploitation, labor, and domestic servitude is the third fastest growing illegal enterprise. The United States is the second highest destination in the world for trafficked women, with an estimated 17, 500 women being smuggled in every year. Human traffickers find New York to be a great market. In fact, New York City is consistently named as one of the top cities that traffickers operate in.

NOW-NYC launched a critical campaign: **Ending the Business of Human Trafficking in New York City** in the Fall of 2006. We're combating this pervasive problem by raising community awareness of human trafficking throughout New York; educating local businesses about their role in this illegal industry and working with local and state agencies to make trafficking a top priority in New York City. Working with the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition, we secured a New York law that criminalizes trafficking, provides services for women and makes the tracking of trafficking a priority for the Division of Criminal Justice Services in New York.

Aimed at ending newspapers and magazines' reliance on advertisement revenue from illegal massage parlors and brothels, NOW-NYC is asking local publications to stop doing business with the organized commercial sex industry by signing an antitrafficking pledge ***Trafficking Free, NYC! (Manhattan Media has signed on)***

"Traffickers supply the local brothel market to meet demand for commercial sex," Ossorio said. "Once publishers understand how these massage parlors and 'bodywork' businesses operate, many are making the decision not to be associated with it. Others, unfortunately are generating such a big percentage of their revenue from it, they feel they can't walk away."

“The proliferation of organized prostitution in communities throughout New York is undeniable,” according to Ted Hughes, a law enforcement expert in organized criminal prostitution rings. “They are part of the local economy. Whether it’s the landlords who rent to traffickers at three times the market rate or the publications that act as the marketing arm of this organized crime, the scope of the problem is larger than most people would like to think.”

New York Press, along with the Village Voice, New York Magazine and the Verizon Yellow Pages are the leading publications that serve as the intermediary between “johns” and trafficked people. The Village Voice, a weekly with more than twice the readership of the Press, generates an average of \$80,000 per month from the adult ads on its back pages, New York Magazine generates about \$40,000 a month and the Verizon Yellow Pages generates more than \$1 million a year.

These ads are for illegal businesses. In New York, massage parlors must be licensed by the state. If they are not licensed, they are prohibited from advertising or operating. Newspapers understand this. *New York Magazine* and the *New York Press* explicitly make the distinction between legitimate spas and illegal massage parlors by featuring two separate ad categories and by charging up to three times the normal rate for the illegal businesses.

“We’re simply asking publishers to do basic due diligence and use common sense,” Ossorio said. “If someone calls wanting to place an ad that reads ‘Russian Girls, Young, 24/7’ what’s there to check out? Take the contact information and call the police.” This ad appeared in *El Diario/La Prensa* May 17, 2007.

Ads provide buyers of commercial sex access to trafficked women. In March 2006, a large brothel in Flushing, Queens was shut down after an investigation by federal prosecutors. The house had secret passageways, and the vault held the women’s passports, \$800,000 in cash and a supply of the drug ecstasy. This brothel was advertised regularly in the *World Journal*, a daily Mandarin newspaper.

“There aren’t enough American women willing to do high volume assembly-line sex work to meet demand, so foreign women are brought to New York,” Ossorio said. “Brought under the false pretense that jobs await them as babysitters, housekeepers or waitresses, they quickly find out their job recruiters are pimps.”

The National Organization for Women is the nation’s largest organization working to advance women’s rights and improve women’s lives. The New York City Chapter of NOW, founded in 1966, is the largest chapter in the country with 7,000 members locally and 35,000 statewide. NOW-NYC works to protect women’s reproductive choices, end violence against women and eliminate sex discrimination in our schools, workplaces, and the justice system in New York.