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Sonia Ossorio
President, NOW-NYC
212.627.9895

NY Figures Prominently in Global Human Trafficking: *NOW-NYC Sheds Light on Local Economy's Role in Underground Sex Industry*

Human trafficking is a devastating human rights violation occurring in our own backyards, in our own neighborhoods. The United States is the second highest destination in the world for trafficked women, bringing in an estimated 17,500 women every year. New York City is consistently named as one of the top cities that traffickers use as both a point of entry into the U.S., transit location, and as a final destination point for their victims.

This year, NOW-NYC launched its most critical campaign to date: *Ending the Business of Human Trafficking in New York City*. Working in collaboration with city, state, and federal officials, as well as non-governmental organizations, NOW-NYC is combating this pervasive problem by raising community awareness of human trafficking throughout New York State; advocating on behalf of exploited victims by lobbying for comprehensive and effective legislation; and educating local businesses about their role in this illegal industry while suggesting economic alternatives aimed at breaking the cycle of enslavement.

The motive that drives traffickers is the enormous profits to be made. The sex industry alone is a multi-billion dollar moneymaking machine. While the traffickers are directly benefiting, there are numerous "silent actors" who profit as well. Landlords, credit card companies, and news publications often serve as connectors between those who seek the services of trafficked victims and the victims themselves. NOW aims to shine a light on those who are silently participating in the business of sex trafficking and suggest economic alternatives to help wean them off easy, yet illegal, profits.

Beyond NOW-NYC, the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition includes the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, Equality Now, GEMS, inMotion, My Sisters' Place, National Organization for Women-NY State, and Sanctuary for Families. The Coalition is a group of organizations that have joined forces to advocate for an effective New York State law to criminalize traffickers and to protect and help victims of this abuse.

"The booming international trade in women and children for sexual and labor servitude is the dark side globalization. People tend to view trafficking as an international problem, but it is happening in our neighborhoods. There's no silver bullet to stop this, but we have to start with legislation, we have to have laws that penalize traffickers and protect victims."—As you just heard from Taina and Suzanne

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.