



NOW-NYC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 7, 2010

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## **Charges of Rape Against Lawrence Taylor Show Plight of Young Runaways Pimp Charged With Sex-Trafficking**

New York, NY- The charges of rape that currently stand against former New York Giants linebacker Lawrence Taylor are garnering widespread media attention, but for the advocates who have been fighting the commercial sexual exploitation of young girls, this story is nothing new.

Sonia Ossorio, Executive Director of NOW-NYC says, “While many are looking at Taylor’s former brushes with the law and lost endorsement deals, advocacy organizations like ours are focused on the young woman at the center of this horrific case. Here’s a runaway girl who was barely sixteen years old, forced into prostitution by the man who offered her a place to stay. Can you imagine the scene in the hotel room after a call is made for a prostitute, and a very young girl with a black eye shows up? How can anyone with a conscience pursue sex with this young woman? Yet this is what we see happening all over the city, from Roosevelt Avenue in Queens to Hunts Point in the Bronx. Men are buying sex from children and getting away with it.”

A WESTAT study prepared for the Office of Children and Family Services in 2007 puts the estimate of commercially sexually exploited youth in New York City in the thousands. To combat this growing problem, NOW-NYC worked in partnership with advocates from across the city to secure the first anti-human trafficking law in New York State. The new law, passed in 2007, makes sex-trafficking a Class B felony and carries a sentence of up to 25 years in prison. Despite the staggering numbers of victims, there has been only *one* conviction under the new statute since the law went into effect in November of 2008.

The alleged pimp who forced this young woman into prostitution, 36-year old Rasheed Davis, was reportedly arrested on charges of unlawful imprisonment, assault, and endangering the welfare of a child. He was formally charged with sex trafficking in Manhattan federal court earlier today.

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 one of the largest chapters in the country with over 5,000 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.

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