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NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 16, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:35 p.m. by Commissioner Dawne Lomangino-DiMauro.

II. SUNSHINE LAW ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement of the Open Public Meeting Act, commonly referred to as “The “Sunshine Law,” by Commissioner Lomangino-DiMauro, which stated, “The meeting was noticed on December 10, 2020, by sending written notice to The Star-Ledger, The Bergen Record, Gannett, Town Square Media, Burlington County Times, Philly.Com. Additionally, the written notice was filed with the NJ Secretary of State.”

III. ATTENDANCE

PRESENT COMMISSIONERS: Anmarie Taggart, Elizabeth Ruebman, Dawne-Lomangino-DiMauro, Gina Cavallo, Bonny Fraser, Timothy J. Gallagher, Aldina Hovde, Ingrid Johnson, Rush L. Russell.

ABSENT COMMISSIONERS: William P. Monaghan, Angelo Onofri, Marisol Rodriguez.

QUORUM WAS PRESENT.

OTHERS PRESENT: Kathy Friess, Roman Guzik, Cristine Knight, Monica Kristen, Dawn Solari, Kate Less, Caroline Demby, Sarah Lott, Tony D’Urso, Francesca Laguardia, Jenny Sell, Vicki Vreeland.



IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commission reviewed and passed the minutes of the November 18, 2020 Commission meeting.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion of guidelines for public comment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lomangino-DiMauro and seconded to limit public comment to five minutes for each member of the public and to reserve the public comment portion until the end of a meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Polaris Project Presentation

Jenny Sell, Service Provider Partnership Manager at the Polaris Project, gave a comprehensive presentation on the structure of the National Human Trafficking Hotline. Ms. Sell explained the confidential, multi-lingual hotline operates 24/7, with the goal of providing services to victims of sex and labor trafficking. She described the four options for contacting the hotline; calling the hotline number, sending a text message, live chatting, or by submitting a web form.

Ms. Sell said the hotline advocates use the National Referral Directory to locate service providers to assist victims/survivors. She said advocates assess every call to determine a victim's safety, needs, and trafficking situation.

Regarding law enforcement referrals, Ms. Sell said victims/survivors are asked if they would like to be contacted by law enforcement. She said it is hotline policy to notify law enforcement within two hours of a call, but in urgent situations advocates try to make immediate contact.

Commissioners inquired about the hotline's coordination process with other state hotlines, specifically New Jersey. Ms. Sell said the hotline utilizes a list of New Jersey law enforcement members who should be contacted with human trafficking tips. For calls relating to children under the age of 18, Ms. Sell said the New Jersey Child Abuse Hotline is contacted when advocates have details from a call to provide.

Commissioners asked how the Commission could best support the national hotline. Ms. Sell said the Polaris Project needs additional funding to help victims/survivors of all ages and genders, and she said assistance with denouncing viral rumors about human trafficking would be helpful.

Commissioners also questioned the availability of law enforcement training through the Polaris Project noting the current environment is an opportune time to strive to improve interactions between Human Trafficking victims/survivors and law enforcement.

Commissioners agreed training could be a focus in the new year, including from the Office of the Attorney General, which routinely conducts training.

Regarding the medical profession's awareness and response to Human Trafficking victims/survivors, Ms. Sell referred to a report written by the Polaris Project concerning the intersection of emergency departments with Human Trafficking victims/survivors. She said the report discussed the importance of an expedited safety assessment and conversation with a victim/survivor due to the limited time medical personnel may have with a victim/survivor.

Ms. Sell was asked if the Commission could receive a periodic update of hotline calls pertaining to New Jersey. She explained hotline data needs to be "cleaned," prior to being released, which is a process that takes a couple of months. She suggested Commissioners email her with specific data requests.

Tony D'Urso, of the Unified Statistical Data Project at Montclair State University, asked Ms. Sell about obtaining hotline data specific to New Jersey. She responded she would put Mr. D'Urso in contact with the hotline's data team.

Francesca Laguardia, another researcher on the Montclair team, reported some data has been coming in, but that it has been incomplete. Ms. Laguardia asked the Commission what it is looking for in the data. Commissioners responded they are seeking to determine the prevalence of Human Trafficking in New Jersey, along with identifying any deficiencies in data collection throughout the state.

3. Dream Free
4. Commission on Human Trafficking Annual Report 2020

Due to the lengthy presentation and question period, Commissioner Lomangino-DiMauro stated two agenda items, Dream Free and the Commission on Human Trafficking Annual Report 2020, would need to be tabled for the next meeting,

5. Legislative Update

Commissioner Elizabeth Ruebman advised the Commission Senate Bill No.280 (S280) was heading to the legislature. A brief discussion ensued concerning how provisions of the bill would be enforced and funded, and the Commission's task in promoting awareness of Human Trafficking in businesses and communities.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Meeting was opened to public comment by Commissioner Lomangino-DiMauro. No public comment.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to end meeting, seconded, and passed. Meeting ended 2:30 p.m.