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# **International Human Trafficking at Major Sporting Events including the 2014 Super Bowl**

*Excerpts of Remark by Chairman Chris Smith  
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and Int'l Orgs.  
2172 Rayburn HOB  
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Our hearing today will focus on the preparations for the upcoming Super Bowl to prevent human trafficking and strategies employed by airlines, busses and trains, as well as hotels designed to mitigate human trafficking.

In less than a week, New Jersey will be hosting the Super Bowl, and along with welcoming enthusiastic fans, the state also is preparing for a likely influx of both domestic and international traffickers.

Sadly, but almost certainly, they will bring with them sexually exploited trafficking victims— many of them from abroad—in an attempt to cash in on the Super Bowl crowds. We know from the past, any sports venue—especially the Super Bowl—acts as a sex trafficking magnate. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reports that more than 10,000 exploited women and girls were trafficked to Miami for the Super Bowl in 2010.

This must not happen again! New Jersey Governor Chris Christie has put in place a robust anti-human trafficking plan. For example, his Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness has stepped-up efforts to combat trafficking at the Super Bowl, distributing flyers to emergency medical services, fire department, law enforcement, and other emergency care professions so that these front line professionals will know when to be concerned that someone is a trafficking victim and how to respond appropriately. The transportation and hospitality training concept has proven straightforward, effective—and it is catching on.

On her way to yet another assembly and community awareness conference at St. Elizabeth's College in Morristown, NJ Assistant Attorney General Tracy Thompson, who is spearheading the Christie Administration's anti-human trafficking effort, told me earlier today that they have trained 10,000 people, including a train-the-trainer initiative. She noted that the Super Bowl creates an increased "breeding ground" for sex trafficking.

She said, "Today's victims can be any race, age or gender. Victims are exploited for prostitution, pornography and forced labor.

Traffickers control victims through force and fraud utilizing physical and psychological abuse, threats and isolation.

Know it. See it. Report it."

According to Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, the Super Bowl can be described as "the single largest human trafficking incident in the United States." Capt. Doug Cain, Louisiana State Police spokesman, said after the 2013 Super Bowl in New Orleans, "Any time you have a large influx of tourists in town and they're spending a lot of money, there's a criminal element that moves in to take advantage of that."

Greece, which hosted the Olympics in 2004, saw a 95% increase in trafficking victims in the months leading up to and including the Olympics. Next month, Russia — a country ranked at the lowest Tier by the annual U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report — will host the winter Olympic Games. Since Russia does not have in place any formal national procedures to guide law enforcement in the identification of sex trafficking victims and does not fund trafficking victim care, I am very concerned that the 2014 Winter Olympics may turn out to be a trafficking nightmare.

Later this year, Brazil will host the 2014 World Cup and then the 2016 Summer Olympics. Although Brazil has improved their anti-trafficking laws and is taking steps to mitigate trafficking risks, the fact remains that Brazil will have to do much more if they want to protect their children from sex tourism. Numbers from Brazil's Federal Police indicate that between 250,000 and 400,000 children are forcibly prostituted.

Worldwide, the best estimates are that 600,000 to 800,000 trafficking victims are moved across international borders every year. Millions more victims are moved within national borders. But anti-trafficking efforts have only recently turned to equipping transportation employees to identify victims in transit. The training is easy, inexpensive, and is already saving lives.

In July of 2010, I chaired a conference in Washington, D.C., to bring together the relevant U.S. agencies, such as the Customs and Border Patrol, various US airlines, and non-governmental organizations to focus on interdicting traffickers by training commercial transportation employees to recognize the indicators for trafficking. Speakers, including Deborah Sigmund, founder of an NGO (non-government organization) called Innocents at Risk,

explained how flight attendants were the “first line of defense” in the fight against human trafficking.

Flight attendants are in the unique position to observe a potential trafficking in progress and then call a trafficking hotline or inform the pilot to radio ahead so that the proper authorities can intervene.

Former flight attendant Nancy Rivard, President of Airline Ambassadors International and one of today’s witnesses, told us how she and other flight attendants compared notes one day and were shocked and dismayed at how often they had noticed what they suspected was a trafficked woman or child on their flight, but had no training or protocol to do something about it. Nancy has been doing a great deal about it ever since, training airline employees around the United States and world. (Last year I joined Ms. Rivard at a training seminar in Kiev, Ukraine.)

One of the earliest successes of the program was a call Ms. Rivard placed to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security regarding a child she had observed on her flight from the Dominican Republic to Boston. That tip led to the break-up of a trafficking ring that had transported more than 80 children to the United States.

Just this year, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released a similar training initiative, the Blue Lightning program, to domestic U.S. airlines—so far, Delta, JetBlue, Allegiant, and North American Airlines are on board. With minimal modifications, the training is also easily adaptable to bus drivers and station operators, train conductors, trucking associations, and other transportation industry professionals.

The New Jersey Human Trafficking Task Force, which was originally started with seed money from a law I authored—the Trafficking Victim’s Protection Act of 2000—is working overtime to mitigate sex trafficking and has released anti-trafficking brochures to bus and train employees in New Jersey, as well as reached out to another major industry on the front lines of spotting traffickers and victims: the hotels.

We have with us today the NGO End Child Prostitution and Trafficking, or ECPAT-USA, which has been conducting hotel training on behalf of the task force in the lead-up to the Super Bowl. Hyatt, Hilton, Wyndham, Carlson, and Accor hotels have been establishing a new industry standard to ensure that their properties are not used for human trafficking.

In addition to reaching out to transportation employees and hotels, the New Jersey Human Trafficking Task Force has increased print and electronic public service announcements and training programs for law enforcement officials, health care workers, lawyers, and others on the front lines of potential interactions with trafficking victims.

In December, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which comprises 57 countries from Europe and North America, endorsed my plan to make anti-trafficking training for airline employees, other public and commercial carriers, as well as hotel employees, a primary goal in the international strategy to combat human trafficking. In an

earlier session, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCEPA) adopted my resolution to implement such training in each member country.

Any country that competes to host the next major sporting event must be fully aware of the human trafficking vulnerabilities associated with such events and the best practices for protecting and rescuing the victims. In fact, the International Olympic Committee and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, or FIFA, should take into consideration a country's anti-trafficking commitment and ability when awarding games. Standard anti-trafficking measures should be included along with the required security measures and stadium specifications.

Finally, the only standard that fits the crime of human trafficking—zero tolerance—must be rigorously and faithfully enforced by arrests of those engaged in this nefarious trade—modern-day slavery. And there can be no higher priority than the liberation and protection of the victims. Combating human trafficking must be continuously prioritized at all levels of government, the faith community, civil society and corporations, including the National Football League. All of us must do our part to protect the women and girls.