

## **New campaign aims to prevent modern-day slavery in America**

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### **Body**

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Matchbooks with a toll-free number hidden inside the flap to call for assistance. Adhesive bandages printed with the same number. Anti-**slavery** posters.

A nonprofit group hopes to use these tools in brothels, coin laundries and health clinics to reach out to victims of human trafficking in South Florida.

Since the Florida Freedom Partnership started distributing posters in May, the group has received 40 calls a month. Some callers want to report cases of human trafficking. Others want to learn to identify victims.

At a state refugee services conference Wednesday at the Belleview Biltmore Resort and Spa, a panel of experts emphasized the importance of collaboration between law enforcement and social service workers in targeting **modern-day slavery**.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' "Look Beneath the Surface" **campaign** targets social workers and others who may come into contact with victims of human trafficking every day but not know it.

"You may have concerns about reporting indentured servitude to law enforcement," said Doug Molloy, chief assistant U.S. Attorney in Fort Myers. "We're not looking to deport them. We're looking to put those who make money off the dreams of young men and women in jail."

Between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year for sex, labor or involuntary servitude, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

Trafficking of humans has surpassed arms dealing as the second largest criminal industry in the world behind drug trafficking, Molloy said.

President Bush has allocated millions of dollars for victims, law enforcement agencies and organizations that provide shelter.

Most trafficking cases have been prosecuted at a federal level, but supporters of a **new** state law say the federal government has limited resources to investigate violators.

Under the **new** law, which took effect Oct. 1, sex trafficking involving minors is a first-degree felony with a maximum punishment of as much as 30 years in prison.

It's a second-degree felony to force an adult into prostitution or labor.

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Trafficking networks can also be prosecuted as organized crime syndicates.

Collier County Sheriff's Office Lt. Bill Rule advised domestic violence and migrant counselors to watch for labor camps that look like prison camps, and workers with no personal papers.

It's also important to keep cultural differences in mind, Molloy said.

Collier County sheriff's deputies responding to a domestic call between a man and his wife questioned a young Guatemalan girl who was discovered on a mattress in the house. She told authorities she was a slave.

The girl worked as a domestic servant, picked vegetables in the field and was the man's sex slave, Molloy said.

At the time of his arrest, Jose Tecum was carrying a lock of her hair. Because deputies were sensitive to local customs, they realized its importance: the girl believed that with the lock of hair, Tecum owned her soul. He was sentenced to nine years in federal prison. His victim named her second child after the FBI agent who helped put Tecum away.

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## Classification

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