



Proposal: Strengthening Toronto's Response to Human Trafficking

Submitted by: Leah McSpadden, Founder – Voice for the Silent



Objective:

To propose a strategic, research-backed initiative for the City of Toronto to enhance its response to human trafficking through increased funding for law enforcement, survivor reintegration programs, and youth prevention initiatives.

The Urgency: Toronto as a Human Trafficking Hub

- Toronto is a major trafficking hub in Canada, with Ontario accounting for over 65% of all human trafficking cases in the country.
- Average age of entry into trafficking: 12-14 years old, with youth being recruited from schools, transit hubs, and social media.
- Traffickers make up to \$280,000 per victim per year, tax-free, while survivor services and law enforcement remain underfunded.

Key Recommendations

Increase Funding for the Toronto Police Anti-Human Trafficking Unit

- **Expand unit personnel to enhance investigative capacity and support survivor-centered interventions.**
- **Provide continuous trauma-informed training for officers handling trafficking cases.**
- **Implement specialized units for digital recruitment monitoring (similar to successful U.S. models in Atlanta and Houston).**

Create a Municipal Fund for Survivor Employment & Housing Support

- **Develop an employment reintegration program in partnership with local businesses.**
- **Support record expungement advocacy for trafficking survivors to remove employment barriers.**
- **Expand access to safe, long-term housing options to reduce re-exploitation risk.**

Implement Youth Prevention & Education Initiatives

- **Introduce mandatory anti-trafficking education in Toronto schools to prevent recruitment.**
- **Expand Safe Transit Programs at major bus and train stations to protect vulnerable youth.**
- **Launch a city-wide trafficking prevention awareness campaign targeting at-risk communities.**

Next Steps & Call to Action

1. **Meet with Toronto Police & City Council to discuss budget allocations for anti-trafficking efforts.**

2. Collaborate with survivor-led organizations to integrate lived experience into policy solutions.
3. Develop a city-wide multi-sector task force (government, police, businesses, nonprofits) to improve survivor reintegration programs.
4. Champion legislative change by advocating for Bills C-308 & S-263 (National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking), S-210 (Protecting Young Persons from Pornography Act) and C-270 (Stopping Internet Sexual Exploitation Act) at the provincial and federal levels.

Why This Matters to Toronto

- Aligns with Mayor Chow's commitment to protecting marginalized communities—trafficking disproportionately affects women, BIPOC communities, LGBTQ+ youth, and those facing poverty.
- Improves public safety by dismantling trafficking networks that fuel organized crime, violence, and drug activity.
- Reduces long-term social costs—investing in survivor support lowers dependency on public assistance, shelters, and emergency services.

Survivors deserve real support. Toronto has the opportunity to lead Canada's fight against trafficking. Let's make it happen.

For further discussion, please contact:

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