



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

News for Immediate Release

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Pennsylvania Courts Launch Human Trafficking Campaign to Raise Awareness

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania Courts are using a new social media campaign to educate Pennsylvanians about the signs and risk factors of the many forms human trafficking can take and the resources available for victims of human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a type of human rights abuse where people profit from the exploitation of others – mainly using force, fraud or coercion to manipulate victims into engaging in sex acts or labor/services in exchange for something of value.

There is no one-size fits all way to identify a trafficking victim. Human trafficking victimization is complex and can present in numerous, unique ways – sometimes in a courtroom before a judge when a victim or offender is brought up on multiple, unrelated charges.

In Pennsylvania, trafficking survivors can petition the court to vacate convictions for prostitution, criminal trespass, disorderly conduct, loitering and prowling at night, obstructing highways and other public passages, and simple possession of a controlled substance if their convictions were sustained as a result of trafficking victimization.

Produced by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, the campaign uses its social media platforms and website to illustrate a variety of human-trafficking misconceptions and the tactics traffickers may use to manipulate women and men.

Anyone under age 18 who exchanges sex for something of value are human-trafficking victims, regardless of whether force, fraud or coercion are involved.

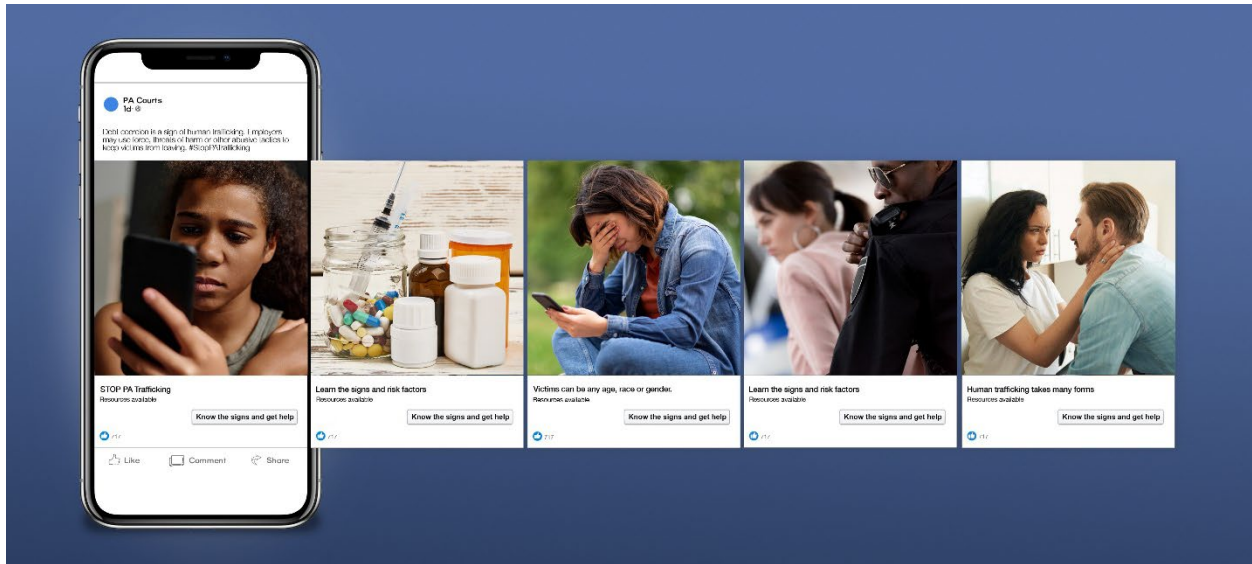
While there is much wider awareness about sex trafficking in the U.S., human trafficking also encompasses labor trafficking. In a labor trafficking situation, persons are exploited for cheap or unpaid labor and are sometimes forced to take on unreasonable debt as a condition of employment.

By far, the most recognized belief about human trafficking is that it always involves kidnapping or otherwise physically forcing someone into a situation. In reality, most human traffickers use psychological means such as tricking, defrauding, manipulating or threatening victims into providing commercial sex or exploitative labor.

Anyone can be trafficked, but it is no coincidence that traffickers recognize and take advantage of people in vulnerable situations.

Trafficking victimization is complicated, and victims do not always self-identify. The fear, shame, trauma, isolation and manipulation inherent in human trafficking can prevent a victim from seeking help or attempting to leave an exploitative situation, no matter how dangerous.

More information about the campaign is available on [Facebook](#), or by visiting the [PA Courts website](#). Report suspected trafficking to the Pennsylvania State Police tipline at 1-888-292-1919 or tips@pa.gov, or to the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733.



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