



A bold voice for transportation workers

JOINING THE FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a worldwide problem with as many as 27 million women, men and children sold into prostitution, domestic servitude or other forced labor in dark corners across the globe. While it is easy to think of this as a foreign issue, these atrocities are all too often committed on American soil. Unfortunately, our own transportation systems are frequently used by perpetrators of human trafficking to whisk their victims throughout the country, unnoticed by those who freely travel for work and recreation or those who work in transportation.

This is a modern problem that requires modern solutions. Traffickers rely on our transportation network to move their victims inconspicuously and hide their crimes in plain view. Fortunately, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has launched Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking, a collaborative effort with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) designed to actively engage transportation industry leaders, unions, workers and government to identify and stop human trafficking in this country. The goals of this program are to raise awareness about the issue in the transportation industry and educate the transportation workforce about identification and reporting techniques.

As elected leaders of unions that represent workers in every aspect of our nation's transportation system, TTD and our 31 affiliated unions are in a unique position to contribute to the fight against human trafficking. By combining leadership, education and training, and public awareness and outreach efforts, we can have a collective impact to combat this atrocity head on. Transportation labor is committed to eradicating the use of our transportation system as a safe haven for predatory criminals.

The DOT has already been leading the way. In October of last year, Secretary Ray LaHood announced an initiative through DHS' Blue Campaign to begin training all 55,000 DOT employees and 20,000 contractors on ways to identify common signs of human trafficking. Private employers are joining the effort. Amtrak has committed to train its 20,000 employees, the majority of whom are members of TTD affiliates, on tactics to identify and report suspected instances of human trafficking.

The training and resources made available by DHS and DOT are simple, effective and free to our members. DHS offers brief online training options for individuals providing them with an overview of the problem as well as tips and instructions to help workers identify warning signs of human trafficking and ways to alert the appropriate authorities. Some of these resources are specific to the mode of transportation. For instance, Blue Lighting, a partnership between DOT

and DHS, provides commercial airlines with a voluntary mechanism to fight human trafficking that includes training, printed material and safe methods for airline personnel to anonymously report suspicious behavior to law enforcement.

Perhaps most importantly, Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking has launched an interactive web-based workspace that gives transportation workers and officials from across the country access to shared resources and materials anywhere they have access to the internet. Individualized log-in information allows participants to view training materials and videos, employee recognition programs, response protocols, survivor stories and media coverage. It is also a workspace where people can share tips, discuss tactics and track our progress. It is truly the most comprehensive effort ever undertaken to address this problem.

As labor organizations with members in all modes of the transportation industry, both private and public, TTD affiliates will lend assistance in a number of ways. We will use our outreach and communications tools to serve as a mouthpiece to the transportation workforce by posting links to Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking resources on our websites, and to reach out directly to our membership through social media to help raise awareness about the problem and engage our members. We will incorporate this initiative into local and regional union meetings to engage members on the ground. And where appropriate, we will partner with employers to bring best practices and training to workers who staff our transportation systems every day.

TTD and our affiliated unions are proud to stand with DOT and DHS and do our part by working with these agencies to connect as many transportation workers as possible to the information and training resources provided by this interagency initiative championed by the Obama Administration. Our hope is that transportation labor can make a difference by standing up for victims of the horrendous practice of human trafficking.

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