

# AG Kaul: Advises residents to be alert to increased risks for human trafficking

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MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul is advising residents to be alert to potential human trafficking during the current health crisis. Social and physical isolation and economic insecurity contribute to the susceptibility of victims, and human traffickers are using it to their advantage. World Day Against Trafficking in Persons is July 30, 2020.

“The Wisconsin Department of Justice continues to fight human trafficking, coordinating with local law enforcement and victim advocates to protect communities and support survivors,” said Attorney General Kaul. “We must keep working to eradicate this horrendous crime.”

Commercial sexual exploitation of adults and children can also occur online. Parents especially should be aware of increased online exploitation activity. In the first quarter of 2020, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) became aware of predators openly discussing the pandemic as an opportunity to entice unsupervised children into producing sexually explicit material. NCMEC also experienced an explosion in reporting to their CyberTipline from both the public and electronic service providers<sup>[1]</sup>.

DOJ is also partnering with the Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association (WPMCA) and Wisconsin State Patrol to educate members of the convenience store industry during the summer travel season. This project aims to increase understanding of the signs of human trafficking among owners and workers who are in a unique position to recognize and report it. Store owners are encouraged to place the National Human Trafficking Hotline number in areas such

as restrooms where victims are likely to see it.

If you or someone you know needs help call 911. The National Human Trafficking Hotline also assists victims and accepts tips 24/7 at 1 (888) 373-7888. For help finding a local service provider, reach out to the DOJ Office of Crime Victim Services or visit the service directories on DOJ's human trafficking website at [www.BeFreeWisconsin.com](http://www.BeFreeWisconsin.com).

Learn how to identify key signs at [www.BeFreeWisconsin.com](http://www.BeFreeWisconsin.com), and if you suspect human trafficking, contact law enforcement.

### **Human Trafficking Resources:**

Call the National Human Trafficking Hotline for help or to report a tip 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1 (888) 373-7888, or text 233733.

[www.humantraffickinghotline.org](http://www.humantraffickinghotline.org)

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children CyberTip Reporting

<https://report.cybertip.org/>

1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)

For more information about human trafficking, including victim services, statutes and industry specific materials, visit [www.BeFreeWisconsin.com](http://www.BeFreeWisconsin.com).

Visit the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families' "WI, We Need to Talk" website for resources to promote dialogue between adults, parents and children about youth sex trafficking at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisconsintalks>.