



# Truckers Against Trafficking

Make the Call, Save Lives!

1-888-373-7888

---

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Scott Perry  
Ryder

Elisabeth Barna  
ATA

Brad Riley  
iEmpathize

Molly Wolff

Bruce DD MacRae  
UPS

Sam Smith  
Travel Centers of  
America

Dave Nemo  
Sirius XM Radio  
Personality

Gary Clark  
Bridgestone

Chief David Lorenzen  
Office of Motor Vehicle  
Enforcement-Iowa DOT

Kendis Paris  
Executive Director of  
Truckers Against  
Trafficking

On behalf of Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT), I'd like to thank Chairman Thune, Ranking Senator Nelson, and the distinguished members of the committee for inviting us to take part in this informational hearing. We applaud the committee's efforts to bring attention to the horrific crime of human trafficking, and recognize that it is going to take all of us ... legislators, survivor-leaders, non-profits, law enforcement officers, industry members, state agencies, and the general public ... doing our part to truly assist victims, as well as prevent future ones.

On January 6, 2015, an RV pulled into a truck stop in Virginia. Police were soon called to the scene. When they arrived, and after interviewing the occupants of the vehicle, the horrific story made headlines. A young woman, 20 years old, had been kidnapped two weeks prior out of Iowa. She had been beaten, raped, her whole body burned by instruments heated on the RV stove, branded and starved. She was being sold by her traffickers, Laura Sorenson and Aldair Hodza, through sex ads on Craigslist, where men were purchasing her and then arriving at the RV to rape her. She was dying from malnutrition and the torture she was subjected to ... had the call not been made that brought law enforcement out to that truck stop, doctors said she would have died within the next few days. That call was made by Florida-based, professional truck driver Kevin Kimmel, who recognized that something was off -- something was wrong -- and instead of turning a blind eye, he picked up the phone. She calls him her guardian angel. He calls himself a Trucker Against Trafficking.

People ask us, why truckers? And there are actually quite a number of reasons why. At any given time, there are more truck drivers out on the road than there are law enforcement officers. There are over 3 million CDL holders in America and they truly are the eyes and ears of our nation's highways. Moreover, they are trained to be vigilant, and along with truck stop employees, can find themselves intersecting with victims of human trafficking in a myriad of places. That's why we began TAT ... to educate, equip, empower and mobilize the United States trucking industry to combat human trafficking as part of their regular jobs.

We have three main goals. The first is to saturate trucking and related industries with training materials which are free-of-charge, readily available and industry-specific. To date, over 329,800 trucking industry members have been registered as TAT Trained on our website. All 50 state trucking associations have now partnered with TAT, as well as the

vast majority of national trucking associations.

Some of our partners include the American Trucking Associations, the Truckload Carriers Association, the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association and the National Association of Truck Stop Operators.

Our second goal is to partner with law enforcement and government agencies to facilitate the investigation of human trafficking. We work continuously to bring together trucking industry members with their local law enforcement and state agencies in an effort to close loopholes to traffickers. One of the ways we do this is through our coalition build program which is designed to establish an effective and sustainable working relationship between the trucking industry and law enforcement statewide, in order to combat the crime of human trafficking. TAT has held 29 coalition builds in 20 states across the nation, partnering with 11 Attorney's General offices, as well as Homeland Security Investigations, FBI, state police and local law enforcement agencies. As a result of these meetings, thousands in the trucking industry and hundreds of law enforcement officers have been trained on human trafficking.

Thirty-one states have now adopted TAT's Iowa Motor Vehicle Enforcement model, in part or in whole. This model allows TAT to utilize the pre-existing overlap between commercial vehicle enforcement units and the trucking industry through ports of entry, weigh stations, interdiction stops and mandatory safety compliance meetings within trucking companies.

This model also allows TAT to activate often overlooked state agencies in combating human trafficking, insofar as the Department of Transportation, Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Revenue, Department of Licensing and Department of Public Safety now have specific pathways to help equip and educate an industry on the front lines of combating human trafficking.

Our third goal is to marshal the resources of our partners to combat this crime. This is why in 2014, we created the Freedom Drivers Project, a 48'-long custom show trailer outfitted with actual artifacts from human trafficking cases, as well as the stories of the real Truckers Against Trafficking, and the many companies who are on the front lines everyday combating this crime across our nation.

The FDP has already completed 88 events in 28 states, traveling over 89,900 miles, with 20,700 people walking through its doors, making it a very innovative and effective tool in educating critical stakeholders, and rallying members of the media and the general public to this cause.

Moreover, with the help of the American Trucking Associations Road

Team Captains, as well as Walmart, CFI Industries, and additional trucking companies, industry ambassadors have begun to train rotary members, their local churches and schools, as well as each other on the realities of human trafficking and how to report it effectively. In addition, TAT will be launching a demand campaign centered around the connection between purchasing commercial sex and sex trafficking, as it is imperative that buyers of commercial sex understand that they are driving this market. It is our hope that the professional drivers at the forefront of this campaign will create inspiration for more of these conversations to occur.

And the great news is, these programs are working. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, truckers have now made 1836 calls, reporting 525 cases of potential human trafficking identifying 972 victims, with 315 of those being minors.

And that's only one slice of the data pie, as we know that many drivers still contact 911 or their local sheriff's office to report this crime. To that end, TAT conducted its own survey in 2016 and found that out of the 1500 truck drivers and truck stop employees who responded, that an additional 521 victims of sex trafficking were identified, with the vast majority of these cases being reported via 911 or to their local sheriff.

If every driver and truck stop employee had this life-saving information and training, imagine how many more calls will be made, imagine how many victims will be recovered out of this horrible reality, how many perpetrators -- both the traffickers AND the buyers of commercial sex -- will be arrested.

It is my great honor to appear in this important hearing, and TAT hopes to be a continued advocate and partner with all of those in attendance today to combat human trafficking. It truly is going to take all of us. We must continue to turn critical populations who were once passive about this crime into a disruptive force. This is why TAT has taken steps to replicate its model across borders, across industry sectors, and across modes of transportation. We applaud the members of this committee for the good work they are doing to strengthen laws that protect the vulnerable and exploited, and see to it that their traffickers, and those who purchase them, are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. We also applaud the United States trucking industry who serves as a model for what is possible when people know and care about what is really going on out there. People who are willing to take a second look and become change-makers right where they're at. In the words of professional driver and everyday hero Kevin Kimmel, "We need to get back to a place where if there's somebody in need, we step up to help. There are a lot of things in life that aren't obvious, but this isn't one of them."