

MAINE STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO HOLD BRIEFING ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

What: Briefing of the Maine State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

When: Monday, April 2, 2012, 8:45 a.m. ET

Where: Wishcamper Auditorium, University of Southern Maine, 34 Bedford St., Portland

Washington, DC - The Maine State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will convene a public briefing to gather information from law enforcement, federal and local government officials, human service providers, advocates and educators on the issue of human trafficking in Maine.

Background: Human trafficking in the United States is an issue that is often misunderstood. The victims of human trafficking have many faces. They are men and women, adults and children. They are trapped in forced sexual or labor exploitation and are often subjected to horrible physical and sexual abuse. President Obama has called human trafficking modern-day slavery. Calling it a shared responsibility, the President urged that America “can and must end this most serious, ongoing criminal civil rights violation.” The Attorney General echoed this concern, calling human trafficking a “cruel practice that persists on an enormous and alarming scale.” Attorney General Holder said that combating the entrapment, abuse, and exploitation of trafficking victims is one of DOJ’s highest priorities.

The issue of human trafficking in Maine is being revisited by government officials. Last year, law enforcement and social service agencies held a conference on human trafficking. Dan Perry, an assistant U.S. attorney for Maine, said, “I think we all recognize we are at the precipice of something that can get much worse if we don't address it early on.” Three months ago, a national advocacy group, looking at laws dealing with sex trafficking of minors, issued a report card finding fault with Maine’s enforcement efforts.

To better understand the issue, the Maine State Advisory Committee will hold a briefing to gather information on current efforts and ask what more needs to be done. “The Advisory Committee hopes that by bringing diverse and informed voices together we can encourage more public engagement, legislative action, and stronger collaborations to help combat this growing civil rights issue both in Maine and the United States,” said Rachel Talbot Ross, Chair.

The Advisory Committee will hear from a variety of speakers, including Maine Attorney General William Schneider; Advocate Dee Clarke; Chief Phil Crowell of the Auburn Police Department; Cynthia Deitle, Supervisory Special Agent with the FBI; Halsey Frank, Assistant U.S. Attorney; Destie Sprague, Program Director for the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault; and U.S. Marshal Noel March. The full agenda is available.

Congress has directed the Commission to establish advisory committees in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to study issues and forward advisory reports to the Commission on matters within agency’s jurisdiction that reflect the views of the majority of SAC members producing the report.

The SACs’ reports to the Commission may rely on studies and data generated by third parties, which are not subject to an independent review by Commission staff. The views expressed in reports are those of a majority of the State Advisory Committee members and do not necessarily represent the views of the Commission or its individual members, nor do they represent the policies of the U.S. government.

THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
Eastern Regional Office

The briefing is open to the public. For more information, contact Barbara de La Viez, Eastern Regional Office at 202-376-7533 or email bdelaviez@usccr.gov

The Maine State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

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