



ERIK NASARENKO

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

NEWS RELEASE



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Contact: Joey Buttitta
Title: Communications Manager/PIO
Phone: (805) 767-3400
Email: Joey.Buttitta@ventura.org

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Ventura County Unites Against Human Trafficking



VENTURA, Calif. – January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month, and today the Ventura County Board of Supervisors officially recognized it with a formal proclamation. The Ventura County District Attorney’s Office reaffirms its commitment to combating this crime and supporting victims. While human trafficking is a global issue affecting millions, it also impacts communities here in Ventura County.

The Ventura County District Attorney’s Office works with law enforcement, the Ventura County Human Trafficking Task Force (VCHTTF), non-profits like Soroptimist International, and community partners to prevent, investigate, and prosecute human trafficking cases.

“Human trafficking is a heinous crime that preys on those in desperate situations,” said District Attorney Erik Nasarenko. “We remain relentless in our efforts to seek justice for survivors, hold offenders accountable, and prevent this exploitation from occurring in Ventura County.”

Throughout Human Trafficking Awareness Month, the Ventura County District Attorney's Office and our partners in the VCHTTF, are engaging in a series of outreach initiatives aimed at raising public awareness. Community members are encouraged to join the fight against human trafficking by remaining vigilant, knowing the signs, and reporting any suspicious activities to local law enforcement.

Human trafficking can happen to anyone regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, age, sexual orientation, or immigration status. Some individuals may be more vulnerable than others due to risk factors such as recent migration or relocation, substance use, mental health concerns, involvement with the child welfare system and being a runaway or homeless youth.

Contrary to movie portrayals and social media, most human sex trafficking occurs over time in relationships where the individual loves and trusts the trafficker and is deceived or forced into believing that they have chosen to participate in commercial sex or forced labor. Those who have experienced human trafficking often do not see themselves as victims and may often stay in the situation because they feel fear, guilt, shame, and misguided loyalty to the trafficker.

Human labor trafficking does happen in Ventura County in industries such as agriculture, hospitality, domestic services, and others. Ventura County's location along the 101 freeway makes it a corridor that provides human traffickers with fast transport and easy access across multiple counties.

The District Attorney's Office is dedicated to supporting human trafficking survivors by connecting them with resources and services. Victim advocates work closely with service providers to ensure survivors get the assistance, protection, and care they need to rebuild their lives.

If you or someone you know might be a victim of trafficking, call 9-1-1. If you think you might be a victim and want more information, call 1-800-636-6738 (adults) or 1-805-261-1212 (minors). For more information on the Ventura County District Attorney's Office's initiatives or to report suspected human trafficking activities, please visit the [Human Trafficking](#) page on our website.