

Submitted by: Assembly Member TESCHE

Prepared by: Assembly Counsel

For reading: February 26, 2008

CLERK'S OFFICE

APPROVED

Date: 2-26-08

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

AR NO. 2008-31

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY IN SUPPORT OF
SENATE BILL 157, AN ACT RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND PROSTITUTION,
INTRODUCED BY THE 25TH LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA.**

WHEREAS, criminal trafficking in persons includes coerced recruitment, transportation, or sale of persons for forced labor or sexual activity, maintained through physical control, physical violence, and various forms of duress and captivity; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking is a form of slavery or imprisonment that is perpetuated through exploitation of some of the most vulnerable people in our society, and

WHEREAS, human trafficking includes sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and child sex trafficking; and

WHEREAS, the DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE 2006 REPORT ON ACTIVITIES TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING estimates that criminal engagement in human trafficking produces profits of \$9.5 billion, and is the third most profitable criminal enterprise, ranking below only drug dealing and arms trafficking; and

WHEREAS, in Senate Hearings before the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, 106th Congress, the United Nations in 2000 estimated 4 million persons per year are trafficked for sex, labor, and other purposes around the globe, and the trend is increasing; and

WHEREAS, Department of Justice trafficking investigations have quadrupled in fiscal years 2001 to 2005, as compared to fiscal years 1996 to 2000, and in the same period of comparison, the number of defendants charged has tripled, and the number of defendants convicted has doubled; and

WHEREAS, here in Alaska in 2001, a Russian national, along with a naturalized citizen co-defendant and a U.S. citizen co-defendant, were convicted of trafficking in both adult women and under age girls, to dance nude in strip clubs, in a case that was jointly investigated by the INS, FBI, APD, and prosecuted by the Criminal Section of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, on February 5, 2008, a federal jury in Anchorage, Alaska, returned guilty verdicts on 28 counts charging an Anchorage man, arrested in December 2006, with sex trafficking of minors and adults, as well as drug trafficking offenses, all related to his criminal

enterprises that had been in operation in Anchorage for at least six years prior to his arrest; and

WHEREAS, the trial established that the defendant targeted women and girls who were homeless, or in low-paying jobs, or runaways; stripped them of their personal property and identification; beat and threatened them, keeping them in a cycle of crack cocaine, forced labor as prostitutes, and captivity; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Municipal Assembly supports the efforts of the federal government, the Vice Unit of the Anchorage Police Department, and the Alaska Human Trafficking Task Force in the investigation and prosecution of persons who profiteer in human trafficking; and

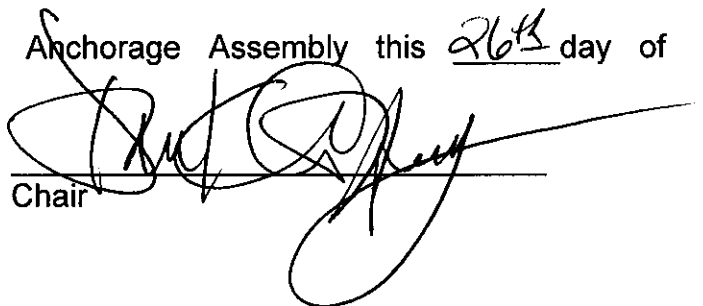
WHEREAS, the Alaska Human Trafficking Task Force has made recommendations for amendment to Alaska Statutes to strengthen state law in this area of human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, Senator Fred Dyson and ten other legislators have sponsored Senate Bill 157 which will implement amendments to Alaska Statutes recommended by the Alaska Human Trafficking Task Force;


NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOVED:

The Anchorage Assembly supports SB 157, and all efforts by the 25th Legislature of the State of Alaska to amend laws to strengthen Alaska's human trafficking statutes, add protection for children under the age of 18, and increase penalties for those convicted of criminal conduct.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 26th day of February, 2008.


Chair

ATTEST:


Municipal Clerk



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM
NO. AM 149-2008

Meeting Date: February 26, 2008

From: Assemblymember Tesche
Subject: **AR 2008-31 — A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 157, AN ACT RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND PROSTITUTION, INTRODUCED BY THE 25TH LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA.**

Human trafficking takes many forms – forced labor in sweatshops, forced work in the sex industry, or in domestic work, in arranged international “marriage”, and in agricultural or other manual labor. Attached for Assembly review are:

- Senate Bill 157
- Fact Sheet for Senate Bill 157
- FBI Anchorage Field Division Press Release February 6, 2008
- Anchorage Daily News Article December 21, 2006
- DOJ Press Release August 28, 2001
- DOJ Press Release, Enhanced Programs to Combat Human Trafficking October 3, 2006

These materials demonstrate that Anchorage and Alaska are not in any way immune to the problems and issues of human trafficking.

I urge the Assembly to support the 25th Legislature in passage of SB 157.

Respectfully submitted:

Allan Tesche, Assembly Member, Section 1

SENATE BILL NO. 157

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATORS DYSON, French, McGuire, Ellis, Bunde, Wagoner, Therriault, Elton, Wilken, Davis

Introduced: 4/18/07

Referred: State Affairs, Judiciary, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to human trafficking and prostitution."**

2 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 *** Section 1.** AS 11.41.360(a) is amended to read:

4 (a) A person commits the crime of human trafficking in the first degree if the
5 person compels or induces another person [TO COME TO THIS STATE] to engage in
6 sexual conduct, adult entertainment, or labor in the state

7 (1) by force or threat of force against any person, [OR] by deception,
8 or by coercion; or

9 (2) when the person compelled or induced is under 18 years of age.

10 *** Sec. 2.** AS 11.66.110(a) is amended to read:

11 (a) A person commits the crime of promoting prostitution in the first degree if
12 the person

13 (1) induces or causes a person to engage in prostitution through the use
14 of force;

15 (2) as other than a patron of a prostitute, induces or causes a person

under 18 [16] years of age to engage in prostitution; or

(3) induces or causes a person in that person's legal custody to engage in prostitution.

* Sec. 3. AS 11.66.110(b) is amended to read:

(b) In a prosecution under (a)(2) of this section, it is not a defense that the defendant reasonably believed that the person induced or caused to engage in prostitution was 18 [16] years of age or older.

* Sec. 4. AS 11.66.110(c) is amended to read:

(c) Promoting [EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN (d) OF THIS SECTION, PROMOTING] prostitution in the first degree is a class A [B] felony.

* Sec. 5. AS 11.66.120(b) is amended to read:

(b) Promoting prostitution in the second degree is a class B [C] felony.

* Sec. 6. AS 11.66.130 is amended to read:

Sec. 11.66.130. Promoting prostitution in the third degree. (a) A person commits the crime of promoting prostitution in the third degree if, with intent to promote prostitution, the person

(1) manages, supervises, controls, or owns, either alone or in association with others, a place of prostitution;

(2) as other than a patron of a prostitute, induces or causes a person 18 [16] years of age or older to engage in prostitution;

(3) as other than a prostitute receiving compensation for personally rendered prostitution services, receives or agrees to receive money or other property pursuant to an agreement or understanding that the money or other property is derived from prostitution; or

(4) engages in conduct that institutes, aids, or facilitates a prostitution enterprise.

(b) Promoting prostitution in the third degree is a class C felony [A MISDEMEANOR].

* Sec. 7. AS 11.66 is amended by adding a new section to read:

Sec. 11.66.135. Promoting prostitution in the fourth degree. (a) A person commits the crime of promoting prostitution in the fourth degree if the person engages

1 in conduct that institutes, aids, or facilitates prostitution.

2 (b) Promoting prostitution in the fourth degree is a class A misdemeanor.

3 * **Sec. 8.** AS 11.66 is amended by adding a new section to read:

4 **Sec. 11.66.145. Forfeiture.** Property used to institute, aid, or facilitate, or
5 received or derived from, a violation of AS 11.66.110 - 11.66.135 shall be forfeited.

6 * **Sec. 9.** AS 47.10.011 is amended to read:

7 **Sec. 47.10.011. Children in need of aid.** Subject to AS 47.10.019, the court
8 may find a child to be a child in need of aid if it finds by a preponderance of the
9 evidence that the child has been subjected to any of the following:

10 (1) a parent or guardian has abandoned the child as described in
11 AS 47.10.013, and the other parent is absent or has committed conduct or created
12 conditions that cause the child to be a child in need of aid under this chapter;

13 (2) a parent, guardian, or custodian is incarcerated, the other parent is
14 absent or has committed conduct or created conditions that cause the child to be a
15 child in need of aid under this chapter, and the incarcerated parent has not made
16 adequate arrangements for the child;

17 (3) a custodian with whom the child has been left is unwilling or
18 unable to provide care, supervision, or support for the child, and the whereabouts of
19 the parent or guardian is unknown;

20 (4) the child is in need of medical treatment to cure, alleviate, or
21 prevent substantial physical harm or is in need of treatment for mental injury and the
22 child's parent, guardian, or custodian has knowingly failed to provide the treatment;

23 (5) the child is habitually absent from home or refuses to accept
24 available care and the child's conduct places the child at substantial risk of physical or
25 mental injury;

26 (6) the child has suffered substantial physical harm, or there is a
27 substantial risk that the child will suffer substantial physical harm, as a result of
28 conduct by or conditions created by the child's parent, guardian, or custodian or by the
29 failure of the parent, guardian, or custodian to supervise the child adequately;

30 (7) the child has suffered sexual abuse, or there is a substantial risk that
31 the child will suffer sexual abuse, as a result of conduct by or conditions created by the

1 child's parent, guardian, or custodian or by the failure of the parent, guardian, or
 2 custodian to adequately supervise the child; if a parent, guardian, or custodian has
 3 actual notice that a person has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor within
 4 the past 15 years, is registered or required to register as a sex offender under AS 12.63,
 5 or is under investigation for a sex offense against a minor, and the parent, guardian, or
 6 custodian subsequently allows a child to be left with that person, this conduct
 7 constitutes prima facie evidence that the child is at substantial risk of being sexually
 8 abused;

9 (8) conduct by or conditions created by the parent, guardian, or
 10 custodian have

11 (A) resulted in mental injury to the child; or

12 (B) placed the child at substantial risk of mental injury as a
 13 result of

14 (i) a pattern of rejecting, terrorizing, ignoring, isolating,
 15 or corrupting behavior that would, if continued, result in mental injury;
 16 or

17 (ii) exposure to conduct by a household member, as
 18 defined in AS 18.66.990, against another household member that is a
 19 crime under AS 11.41.100 - 11.41.220, 11.41.230(a)(1) or (2), or
 20 11.41.410 - 11.41.432, an offense under a law or ordinance of another
 21 jurisdiction having elements similar to a crime under AS 11.41.100 -
 22 11.41.220, 11.41.230(a)(1) or (2), or 11.41.410 - 11.41.432, an attempt
 23 to commit an offense that is a crime under AS 11.41.100 - 11.41.220 or
 24 11.41.410 - 11.41.432, or an attempt to commit an offense under a law
 25 or ordinance of another jurisdiction having elements similar to a crime
 26 under AS 11.41.100 - 11.41.220 or 11.41.410 - 11.41.432; or

27 (iii) repeated exposure to conduct by a household
 28 member, as defined in AS 18.66.990, against another household
 29 member that is a crime under AS 11.41.230(a)(3) or 11.41.250 -
 30 11.41.270 or an offense under a law or ordinance of another jurisdiction
 31 having elements similar to a crime under AS 11.41.230(a)(3) or

1 11.41.250 - 11.41.270;

2 (9) conduct by or conditions created by the parent, guardian, or
3 custodian have subjected the child or another child in the same household to neglect;

4 (10) the parent, guardian, or custodian's ability to parent has been
5 substantially impaired by the addictive or habitual use of an intoxicant, and the
6 addictive or habitual use of the intoxicant has resulted in a substantial risk of harm to
7 the child; if a court has previously found that a child is a child in need of aid under this
8 paragraph, the resumption of use of an intoxicant by a parent, guardian, or custodian
9 within one year after rehabilitation is prima facie evidence that the ability to parent is
10 substantially impaired and the addictive or habitual use of the intoxicant has resulted
11 in a substantial risk of harm to the child as described in this paragraph;

12 (11) the parent, guardian, or custodian has a mental illness, serious
13 emotional disturbance, or mental deficiency of a nature and duration that places the
14 child at substantial risk of physical harm or mental injury;

15 (12) the child has committed an illegal act as a result of pressure,
16 guidance, or approval from the child's parent, guardian, or custodian;

17 **(13) the child has been induced, caused, or permitted to engage in**
18 **a prostitution activity in violation of AS 11.66.**

19 * Sec. 10. AS 47.10.030(c) is amended to read:

20 (c) If the minor is in such condition or surroundings that the minor's welfare
21 requires the immediate assumption of custody by the court, the court may order, by
22 endorsement upon the summons, that the officer serving the summons shall at once
23 take the minor into custody and make the temporary placement of the minor that the
24 court directs. **If the minor is alleged to be engaged in prostitution activities in**
25 **violation of AS 11.66, the court shall order that the officer serving the summons**
26 **take the minor into custody and make the temporary placement of the minor that**
27 **the court directs.**

28 * Sec. 11. AS 11.66.110(d) is repealed.

29 * Sec. 12. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
30 read:

31 APPLICABILITY. Sections 1 - 8 and 11 of this Act apply to offenses committed on or

1 after the effective date of this Act.



25th ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

SENATOR GENE THERRIault, MINORITY LEADER
STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 427, 465-4797 (FAX 465-3884)

www.aksenateminority.com

SENATOR CON BUNDE
SENATOR FRED DYSON
SENATOR TOM WAGONER
SENATOR GARY WILKEN

Fact Sheet for: Senate Bill 157

Contact: Wes Keller, 465-2199

Bill Version: SB 157

Sponsor: Senator Fred Dyson

Short Title: TRAFFICKING/PROSTITUTION/SEXUAL ABUSE

Summary:

- Amends laws to make it illegal to use coercion to compel or induce a person to engage in sexual conduct, adult entertainment, or labor in the state when the person compelled or induced is under 18 years of age.
- Raises the defined age of a prostituted minor from 16 to 18 for aggravating an offense for inducing a person to engage in prostitution.
- Increases penalties for promoting prostitution in the first, second and third degree.
- Creates a new crime of promoting prostitution in the fourth degree if the person engages in conduct that institutes, aids or facilitates prostitution.
- Places a child that has been induced, caused or permitted to engage in prostitution under the State's children in need of aid statutes.
- Requires forfeiture of property used to institute, aid or facilitate, or received from the promotion of prostitution.
- Requires a court to order a child to be taken into custody under child in need of aid statutes when the child is alleged to be engaged in prostitution activities.

Benefits:

- Strengthens Alaska's human trafficking statutes.

Background:

- SB 157 implements amendments recommended by an Alaska human trafficking task force.

SKILLED

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2008

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FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS ANCHORAGE MAN IN THE FIRST SEX TRAFFICKING TRIAL IN THE DISTRICT OF ALASKA

A federal jury in Anchorage, Alaska, returned guilty verdicts late yesterday on 28 counts charging Don Arthur Webster, Jr., 51, also known as "Jerry Starr," with sex trafficking of minors and adults, as well as drug trafficking offenses, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Nelson P. Cohen of the District of Alaska announced today.

This case is the first sex trafficking trial in the District of Alaska. Webster was tried before Senior U.S. District Court Judge H. Russel Holland on charges arising from Webster's operation of sham escort businesses that were fronts for prostitution in the Anchorage area. After hearing testimony for 11 days, the jury found Webster guilty on two counts of sex trafficking of a minor to engage in a commercial sex act; nine counts of sex trafficking of adults by force, fraud, or coercion; two counts of distributing crack cocaine to a pregnant woman; four counts of distributing crack cocaine to individuals under the age of 21; and eight counts of distributing crack cocaine. Webster was also convicted of one count of possessing crack cocaine with intent to distribute it, one count of maintaining premises for the purpose of manufacturing and distributing crack cocaine, and one count of manufacturing crack cocaine.

The evidence at trial established that Webster would target women who were homeless, in low-paying jobs, or runaways and invite them to work for his purported "escort services"—"Foxy Roxies," "Sunshine Girls," "American Beauties," "Kotton Kandy," "Tiffani's," "Tickle Your Fancy," and "Lickety Split"—businesses where an individual would supposedly pay for another person's "time and company." In fact, these escort services were fronts for Webster's illegal prostitution business. In exchange for money from clients who called the escort services' phone lines, Webster would provide adult women and underage girls to engage in sex acts. The prostitution business operated on an "out call" basis, meaning that the females would meet the caller at his residence or at a hotel paid for by the caller. The caller would pay a fixed hourly rate plus a transportation fee to have sex with the female who would meet him, but would pay additional money in exchange for sex acts or drugs which Webster provided.

The youngest victim testified that she was 13 when she began engaging in commercial sex acts for Webster and that she continued to do so for two years. The other minor who was similarly victimized was 17 years old.

The evidence also established that the women were required to give Webster all of the money they earned. When they returned from a "date," they would receive an "issue," which was approximately a gram of crack cocaine. In their testimony, the victims described going on up to ten dates per day, every day, with no days off. They would work up to five days in a row without sleeping. All of the victims testified that they were addicted to crack cocaine when they were involved with the prostitution business.

The women all lived in houses in the Anchorage area that Webster paid for and he imposed rules on them during their residence. They could not have any visitors, nor talk to anyone outside of the "family." They could not purchase anything without his knowledge, and had to provide receipts if they did. They also could not talk to men unless they were getting paid, and they could not obtain drugs from anyone besides him. The women were given an alias to use in connection with the so-called escort services. They called the defendant "Daddy" or "Jerry." Many of them never knew his real name.

According to witnesses, Webster would physically assault and abuse the women in various ways. For example, the victims testified that Webster would often assault one woman in front of the others in order to make an example of her. Victims described being repeatedly choked, punched, slapped, bound, and

strip-searched by Webster or someone acting at his direction. He also threatened to pour boiling water on one victim while another was in the room. In another incident, when one victim left the house, Webster found her and dragged her back by her hair. Additionally, two victims described being locked in "the box," a small crawl space or closet, as punishment for disrespecting him. Furthermore, several victims described a "family" meeting where Webster dragged one young woman into a room, out of the other victims' sight. The witnesses said they could hear the sounds of the resulting beating, and described how that woman emerged bruised and bloody, with chunks of her hair missing. One victim also described Webster raping her, and several others testified that Webster insisted on having sex with them.

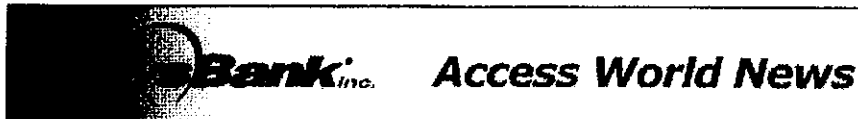
Webster, who was detained prior to trial, will be sentenced on April 25, 2008. He faces a maximum statutory sentence of up to life in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Audrey Renschen and Kimberley Sayers-Fay of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Anchorage, Alaska, and Trial Attorney Alexandra Gelber of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section in the Department's Criminal Division. The investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Vice Unit of the Anchorage Police Department, in conjunction with the Alaska Human Trafficking Task Force.

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Man charged with running sex ring - ANCHORAGE: Five girls and six women were coerced into prostitution, officials say.

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - December 21, 2006

Author: MEGAN HOLLAND Anchorage Daily News ; Staff

An Anchorage man who federal authorities say ran a string of local escort services has been indicted on charges that he beat and intimidated women, many of them teenagers, to force them to work as prostitutes and then paid them in drugs, the U.S. attorney's office said Wednesday. The federal charges against Don Arthur Webster, 49, who went by the name of Jerry Starr, claim he would bring the girls into one of the homes he ran his businesses from, strip them of their personal property and identification, then beat them or threaten them into obeying him.

He took all the money the girls earned, the charges say, then paid them with hits of crack cocaine.

Police said they have identified five girls under 18 and six women whom Webster coerced into working for him. Police believe, however, there were many more victims. Police Sgt. Kathleen Lacey said, "I would like to encourage them to come forward."

The escort services identified as Webster's in court documents filed by prosecutors are listed in the yellow pages of the Anchorage phone book. One ad boasts it specializes in "Catering To Those with Distinguished Taste" and offers "Beautiful and Appropriate Ladies" with limo service. The phone numbers for all the businesses no longer worked Wednesday.

Webster operated his businesses for at least six years, according to the federal indictment that charges him with sex trafficking in children as well as fraud and drug offenses.

Webster ran his prostitution operation under the guise of legal escort services called Foxy Roxies, Sunshine Girls, Tickle Your Fancy, Lickity Split American Beauties, Kotton Kandy and Tiffani's.

The Anchorage Police Department started investigating him a year ago, they said. Once they learned of the extent of the organization, federal authorities, including the FBI, got involved.

Federal authorities initially arrested Webster on drug distribution charges a month ago. He has been behind bars since then.

The indictment says the operation worked like this: Customers called the escort services, which were also listed on the Internet, and arranged for the females to meet them at homes or a hotel room. Callers paid a fixed hourly fee, a transportation fee for the females, and for the room. They could also buy drugs from Webster through the prostitutes.

The females turned over all money to Webster, whom they called "Daddy," then were typically given a gram of crack cocaine for one job.

Among those whom he fed crack were two pregnant females, the documents say.

U.S. Attorney Nelson Cohen declined to provide key details of the operation. He would not indicate how the girls and women were enticed into the ring, or whether they are U.S. or foreign nationals. "We want to protect them," he said.

FBI Special Agent in Charge Toni Fogle said the agency considers what Webster did to the girls a violation of their civil and human rights.

Webster kept the girls in one of six residences he rented or owned around the city. The federal government is trying to seize a property he owned on Oregon Drive in Spenard. Authorities would not

reveal the location of the other homes and their addresses were not included with their Yellow Pages listings.

On Wednesday afternoon, the flat-roofed, single-story home on Oregon Drive had snow-covered mattresses tossed in the backyard, junk cars lined up in the driveway, and a pair of crutches propped near the front door. Nobody answered a knock on the door.

Neighbors said they knew prostitutes lived there, but had no idea about the coercion or beatings.

Neighbor Scott Feris said women would regularly walk to the street corner and be picked up by men in vehicles. "They had a high presence in the neighborhood," he said.

Webster's next door neighbor, Mario Vinoya, said he never really paid attention to the goings-on at the house: "They never bothered me so I never bothered them." He was shocked when he heard the allegations.

Webster has a long criminal history dating back to the 1980s, most of the crimes misdemeanors. Throughout the 1990s he was in and out of jail more than two dozen times, often released for just a few days before committing another crime, according to the state Department of Corrections.

The recent indictment charges Webster with 28 offenses, including four counts of sex trafficking of children, two counts of attempted sex trafficking of children, five counts of sex trafficking by force, fraud, and coercion, and multiple drug charges.

He faces life in prison if convicted.

Daily News reporter Megan Holland can be reached at mrholland@adn.com.

Caption: Photo 1: 21WXS112Sex_Trafficking_122106.jpg
Don Arthur Webster Jr.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2001

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**ALASKA MAN SENTENCED TO 30 MONTHS FOR IMMIGRATION FRAUD AND
TRANSPORTING MINORS FROM RUSSIA TO DANCE IN
AN ANCHORAGE STRIP CLUB**

WASHINGTON, D.C. A Russian national, Victor Nikolayevich Virchenko, was sentenced in U.S. District Court in Anchorage, Alaska yesterday for his involvement in a scheme to traffic both adult women and under age girls into Alaska to dance nude in strip clubs, the Justice Department announced. Virchenko was sentenced today to 30 months in prison, following which he will be deported.

Previously, Virchenko pleaded guilty in federal district court to six counts of immigration fraud and one count of transporting minors. Virchenko's co-defendants Pavel Agafonov, a naturalized U.S. citizen, and Tony Kennard, a U.S. citizen, also pled guilty on June 15, 2001. They will be sentenced later this week.

The Russian victims, who were brought to the United States in December 2000, were freed from the defendants by the INS in January, 2001. The women and girls have temporary legal immigration status and are being housed in a safe location.

The case was investigated and indicted soon after the victims were freed, in order to prevent Virchenko from fleeing the country. He was arrested at the Anchorage International Airport as he attempted to leave with the two minor children.

"The Department of Justice will not tolerate the inhumane treatment of people in America," said Civil Rights Assistant Attorney General Ralph F. Boyd, Jr. "Today's sentence is one of the many steps we are taking to end the growing problem of modern day human trafficking and its toll on the most vulnerable people of our society."

The convictions are the result of a coordinated effort of the Trafficking In Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force, an interagency effort that brings together different agencies to

combat the problem of trafficking in persons and modern-day slavery in the United States. The case, which was investigated jointly by the INS, FBI, and the Anchorage Police Department, was prosecuted by the Criminal Section of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Alaska.

Individuals can report other cases of trafficking or slavery to the Trafficking In Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force complaint line, at 1-888-428-7581. Additional information about the Task Force can be found at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/tpwetf.htm>

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01-438



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2006
WWW.USDOJ.GOV

CRT/OJP
(202) 514-2007
TDD (202) 514-1888

Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales Announces Enhanced Programs to Combat Human Trafficking

National Conference Focuses on Victim Issues and Law Enforcement Solutions

NEW ORLEANS – Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales today announced additional funding, totaling nearly \$8 million, for law enforcement agencies and service organizations for the purpose of identifying and assisting victims of human trafficking and apprehending and prosecuting those engaged in trafficking offenses. The funding announced today will be used to create new Trafficking Task Forces in 10 cities around the country, building on the current work of over 32 national task forces working as part of a collaborative effort among various Department of Justice components, the Departments of Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Labor and State, and national and community-based organizations to combat human trafficking.

Today's announcement was made at the 2006 National Conference on Human Trafficking in New Orleans, where representatives from federal, state and local organizations have gathered to discuss methods of investigating human trafficking and servitude and how victim services are structured and defined.

"Human trafficking is a violation of the human body, mind and spirit. For this vile practice to be taking place in a country that the world looks to as a beacon of freedom is a terrible irony and an utter tragedy," said Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales. "This funding will help cement partnerships between law enforcement agencies and victims' services organizations, and enable the Trafficking Task Forces' work of identifying and assisting victims of human trafficking as well as apprehending and prosecuting the perpetrators of these unconscionable crimes."

Increasing and prosecuting human trafficking has been a major priority of the Department of Justice. Under the direction of the Attorney General, the U.S. Attorneys and the Civil Rights Division have taken the lead in prosecuting human trafficking cases at the federal level. In fiscal year 2006, the Civil Rights Division, working with the various U.S. Attorneys' offices, initiated 167 investigations, charged 111 defendants in 32 cases and obtained 79 convictions involving human trafficking defendants which reflected more than a twofold increase in convictions over the previous year. In April 2006, the Department of Justice obtained two of the longest sentences ever imposed in a sex trafficking case—50 years each for two defendants in New Jersey.

From fiscal years 2001 to 2005, as compared to fiscal years 1996 to 2000, the Justice Department's trafficking investigations have quadrupled, the number of defendants charged has tripled, and the number of defendants convicted has doubled.

Justice Department prosecutors are also supporting the President's Initiative Against Trafficking and Child Sex Tourism by performing assessments of anti-trafficking activities in targeted

countries and making recommendations on program development. For example, prosecutors have worked with their Mexican counterparts to undertake joint investigations, to conduct training for police and prosecutors, and to assist Mexican policymakers in developing anti-trafficking legislation in that country.

Including the new funding announced this morning, the Department of Justice now supports 42 victim-centered law enforcement task forces located throughout the United States including Alaska, Hawaii, and in American Samoa and the Northern Marianas. These task forces are collaborations among U.S. Attorneys, law enforcement, and victim service agencies. Their activities focus on increasing the identification and rescue of trafficking victims through proactive law enforcement, which includes designing a protocol response to the identification of victim services, provision of services, investigation and prosecution of human trafficking cases.

Recipients of the 2006 law enforcement awards are:

• The City of Clearwater Clearwater, Fla.	\$450,000
• Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement Baton Rouge, La.	\$450,000
• City of Independence Independence, Mo.	\$450,000
• Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Las Vegas, Nev.	\$369,572
• Erie County Buffalo, N.Y.	\$450,000
• Northern Mariana Department of Public Safety Saipan, Northern Marianas	\$448,083
• City of Fort Worth Fort Worth, Texas	\$450,000
• Dallas Police Department Dallas, Texas	\$450,000
• Bexar County Sheriff Office San Antonio, Texas	\$406,862
• Salt Lake City Salt Lake City, Utah	\$450,000

Recipients of the 2006 Awards for victim services are:

• Tides Center San Francisco, Calif. (For work in Utah)	\$450,000
• World Relief Corporation Baltimore, Md. (For work in Clearwater, Fla.)	\$450,000
• Hope House Inc. Lee's Summit, Mo.	\$450,000
• The Salvation Army Las Vegas, Nev.	\$449,997
• International Institute of Buffalo, N.Y. Inc. Buffalo, N.Y.	\$449,708
• Karidat Social Services Saipan, Northern Marianas	\$449,793
• Mosaic Family Services Inc. Dallas, Texas (For work in Dallas/Ft.Worth, Texas)	\$449,996
• Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of San Antonio Inc. San Antonio, Texas	\$450,000

The Office of Justice Programs provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. More information about OJP's work on human trafficking can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>. More information about the efforts of the Civil Rights Division to combat human trafficking can be found at http://www.usdoj.gov/whatwedo/whatwedo_ctip.html.

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