



**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Beshear, Partners: Kentucky's Tourism, Hospitality Industry Pledging to
Fight Human Trafficking**

Participating hotels taking pledge to train staff on how to identify, report human trafficking

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Nov. 14, 2017) – Criminals who use Kentucky hotel rooms to carry out human trafficking crimes could soon be identified and reported by hotel staff thanks to a new training initiative unveiled today by Attorney General Andy Beshear and key partners.

The training called, "[See Something - Say Something - Save a Life!](#)" is the state's first coordinated effort that encourages Kentucky hotel owners to sign a pledge to have their front line staff complete an online human trafficking training.

The training specifically warns of red flags of sex trafficking and provides front desk, housekeeping and hotel staff instructions on how to safely report the activity.

"Sadly trafficking occurs in each Kentucky county, city and community, and traffickers take advantage of everyone and everything, including the privacy and anonymity offered in the tourism and hospitality industry," Beshear said. "Today we are giving traffickers notice that we are fighting back with a strong team who is committed to training thousands of hotel staff on how to help a victim escape and put an end to this crime."

Training partners who joined Beshear at today's announcement include the AG's Office of Child Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention and Prosecution; Free2Hope; Catholic Charities of Louisville; Kentucky Hotel and Lodging Association; Kentucky Travel Industry Association and WDRB Media.

Those who sign the pledge will train every new and current employee on identifying and reporting human trafficking and incorporate awareness materials from Free2Hope into their daily operations. Hotels who complete the pledge will receive recognition on the Office of Attorney General's [website](#).

“Free2Hope and our partners have been doing outreach to hotels and businesses for years,” said Amy Leenerts, founder and director of Free2Hope Inc. “We are so pleased with industry leaders who have committed to ending human trafficking through employee training and use of Free2Hope materials.”

“By recognizing the indicators of both labor and sex trafficking, hotel employees can make a report to the appropriate agency,” said Amy Nace-DeGonda, human trafficking case manager, Catholic Charities. “Making reports increases the chances that a survivor can reach needed services. It is imperative that all hotel employees be trained and the hotel initiative will be an important step for all Kentucky hotels to take.”

“Tourism businesses and events are susceptible to innocently and unknowingly being places where human trafficking occurs, but most people in our industry have not known what to look for as indicators of human trafficking nor what to do in response,” said Karen Williams, president of the [Kentucky Travel Industry Association](#). “Now we have the opportunity to inform and educate our industry and we will.”

As the state's chief law enforcement officer, Beshear has established the Office of the Attorney General as the leading agency fighting human trafficking, a modern-day form of slavery in which adults and children are forced into sex or labor services.

This summer Beshear's office provided multiple human trafficking prevention trainings for health care workers, local leaders and law enforcement throughout [Western Kentucky](#).

Beshear's office is currently working 14 human trafficking cases and has assisted local law enforcement with resources in an effort to resolve 96 other human trafficking complaints. His office has trained over 1,500 individuals statewide and forged partnerships with the trucking industries.

The AG's office, along with Catholic Charities of Louisville, received a [federal grant](#) in 2016, the first Department of Justice grant ever awarded to a Kentucky agency for human trafficking. The federal grant provides support to the statewide human trafficking taskforce in its efforts to develop a process for collecting and interpreting data on human trafficking and model protocols for victim-centered response, investigation and prosecution of these cases. The funding also allowed a specially trained human trafficking investigator to be hired.

In 2016, Beshear's office arrested more online child predators than any year in the history of the office. The number of arrests, indictments and convictions totaled nearly 80. His cyber crime investigators also assist with the forensic review of technology on local human trafficking cases.

Beshear said his office will continue to fight to protect trafficking victims who are often the most marginalized in society – victims of abuse and violence, runaways, refugees, immigrants or those who are homeless.

To learn more about human trafficking and efforts to fight it, contact the Attorney General's Office of Child Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention and Prosecution at 502-696-5300 or visit Catholic Charities of Louisville Rescue and Restore program website at <http://www.rescueandrestoreky.org>. The national human trafficking hotline number is 888-373-7888.



AG Beshear's press releases are available on his official website at www.ag.ky.gov.