

# **DOT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING SUMMARY OF MEETING**

**AUGUST 14, 2024**

The Department of Transportation (DOT) Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking (ACHT) convened its fourth meeting at 10:30 a.m. on August 14, 2024, virtually via Zoom. In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the meeting was announced in advance via a Federal Register Notice and was open to the public.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

**Chair:** Rabbi David Saperstein, Director Emeritus and Senior Advisor for Policy and Strategy, Religious Action Center on Reform Judaism

**Vice Chair:** Esther Goetsch, Executive Director, Truckers Against Trafficking

Earlyne Alexander, Supplier Diversity Compliance Manager, Port Authority of NJ & NJ

Mary Dirksen, Senior HR Policy Analyst, Oregon Department of Transportation

Casey French, Deputy District Attorney, San Diego County District Attorney's Office

Heather Healey, Director of Employee Assistance Programs, Association of Flight Attendants – CWA, AFL-CIO

Annika Huff, Survivor Advocate Expert

Michael Krumm, Lieutenant Colonel, Michigan State Police

James Lewis, Communications Manager, Amtrak Police Department

Shamere McKenzie, CEO, Sun Gate Foundation

Tiffany Wlazlowski Neuman, Vice President, Public Affairs, NATSO

Leslie Richards, Chief Executive Officer, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority

Derrick Waters, CEO, Coach USA

Brad White, Associate Director of Safety, Werner Enterprises

## **SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Scott Alexander, International Relations Director, Houston Airports

Lori Ann Chaussinand, Manager, Strategic Sales Development and Training, Pilot Flying J

Lori Cohen, CEO, Protect All Children from Trafficking (PACT)

Dr. Erin DiCesare, Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Johnson C. Smith University

Margo Hill, Associate Professor, Eastern Washington University; Small, Urban, Rural and Tribal Center on Mobility, Principal Investigator

Bishop Donna Hubbard, Executive Director, Women at the Well Transition Center; Training Director, Airline Ambassadors International; Flight Attendant, American Airlines

Kezban Yagci Sokat, Assistant Professor of Business Analytics, San Jose State University

## **PRESENTERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Cindy Dyer, Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, U.S. Department of State

## **OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN ATTENDANCE**

Barbara Arkwright, Captain, Joint Operations Center, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles  
Brandon Buchanan, Director, Regulatory Affairs, American Bus Association  
Cherise Charleswell, Senior Director of Development, Protect All Children from Trafficking  
Yvonne Chen, Director, Protect All Children from Trafficking  
Erica Chung, Strategic Advisor, Port of Seattle  
Raymond Cohen, Deputy Chief, Modernization & Policies Division, The Department of the Air Force  
Travis Ellis, HM/ Training Specialist, Missouri Department of Transportation  
Carlos Estrada, Director of Commercial Homeport Operations, Carnival Cruise Line  
Xylene Gonzalez-Pelayo, Aviation Security Specialist, Air Line Pilots Association, Intl.  
Shelby Hudspeth, Senior Technical Advisor, Cruise Lines International Association  
Wolfgang Koch, Aviation Security Chair, Air Line Pilots Association, Intl.  
James Lensen-Callas, Foreign Affairs Officer, U.S. Department of State  
Jared Miller, CEO, Freedom Aviation Network  
David Price, Senior Manager of Global Talent Partners, Princess Cruises  
Sarah Rajtik, Chief Operating Officer, American Trucking Associations

## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

Maha Alkhateeb, Senior Advisor on Counter-Trafficking and ACHT Designated Federal Officer, OST Office of International Transportation and Trade  
Elliott Black, Director of Airport Policy, Federal Aviation Administration  
Catherine Burnett, Aviation Safety Inspector, Air Transportation Division, Federal Aviation Administration  
Nicole Cacoza, Policy Analyst, Volpe Center  
Harrison Clark, Policy Analyst, Volpe Center  
C.G. Garrard, DEI Program Manager, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Administration  
Shelia Helton-Ingram, Assistant Director, OST Office of International Transportation and Trade  
Aloha Ley, Public Engagement Specialist, Office of Public Engagement  
John Livingston, Security and Emergency Management Specialist, Federal Railroad Administration  
Mary Lisa Madell, Deputy Director, Office of International Transportation and Trade  
Elizabeth Pfenning, Counter-Trafficking Advisor and ACHT Alternate Designated Federal Officer, OST Office of International Transportation and Trade  
Cristina Rechy, International Trade Specialist, Maritime Administration  
Daniele Richards, International Relations Specialist, OST Office of International Transportation and Trade  
Kevin Wandrei, Policy Analyst, Volpe Center  
Keith Williams, Division Chief, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

## **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Designated Federal Officer (DFO) Maha Alkhateeb called the meeting to order, welcomed attendees, and introduced Chair Rabbi David Saperstein.

Chair Saperstein thanked the ACHT members and subcommittee members for their contributions to the report as well as the DOT staff for facilitating the process and updating the report. He emphasized the importance of reaching agreement on any outstanding items while suggesting final edits before September's meeting. Chair Saperstein also invited ACHT members and subcommittee members to reflect on how the report will influence federal and state lawmakers, transportation officials, and many others.

Vice Chair Esther Goetsch expressed her appreciation of the committee and report. She noted that it was a high-quality product with hundreds of pages of readable and actionable content and reaffirmed the committee's appreciation for the DOT staff.

Chair Saperstein offered a chance to object to the adoption of the meeting minutes from the third ACHT meeting and, hearing none, formally adopted them.

## **GLOBAL COUNTER-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS AND TRANSPORTATION INTERSECTIONS + DISCUSSION**

Chair Saperstein introduced Ambassador Cindy Dyer, the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the U.S. Department of State. The Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP Office) leads the Department's global efforts to combat human trafficking and prepares the Department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report). Chair Saperstein expressed his appreciation for the Ambassador's presence and referenced her time working with the Departments of Defense, Justice, and State.

Ambassador Dyer outlined the purpose and content of the Department of State's TIP Report. This year's TIP Report introduction section examines the role and impacts associated with digital technology in the fight against human trafficking. In particular, it focuses on how traffickers use digital technology in both perpetuating and facilitating human trafficking, and how it can be used effectively by the counter-trafficking community to monitor and combat trafficking. New and emerging technologies have the potential to assist the transportation sector with identifying and responding to human trafficking. License plate readers, facial recognition, and QR codes are all tools to achieve this end.

The findings and country assessments in the annual TIP Report also guide foreign assistance priorities, including bilateral and regional initiatives and the Program to End Modern Slavery. The Department of State invests over \$240 million worldwide to stop trafficking in persons. In Tanzania, for example, the TIP Office is funding a special immigration desk at the Zanzibar airport to check the validity of domestic workers' contracts and documents and interview individuals for indicators of trafficking before they depart.

Ambassador Dyer's office partners with lived experience experts through the Department of State's Human Trafficking Expert Consultant Network to incorporate survivor input into Department counter-trafficking policies and programs. Such knowledge has advanced Department policies and resulted in survivor leaders participating in U.S. diplomatic delegations.

Another example of how consultants support the TIP Office is in drafting introductory material for the TIP Report and advising on trauma-informed photography. Over the past few years, these

services have been extended to DOT to inform the development of counter-trafficking awareness materials.

Ambassador Dyer highlighted that another important mandate for her office is collaboration and partnership with colleagues from across the federal government as they increasingly work to combat human trafficking. Counter-trafficking legislation has been reauthorized multiple times, and Congress is an important partner to set this strategic vision. She emphasized President Biden's release of the updated National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking, which the Departments of State and Transportation, among other federal agencies, work to support.

Ambassador Dyer noted that DOT's impact on the fight against human trafficking has been significant, and the committee's report is very impressive. DOT's Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking (TLAHT) initiative also continues to impress, and the new TLAHT survivor awareness campaign empowers travelers and employees across all modes to recognize human trafficking.

The International Civil Aviation Organization also provided clear steps to ensure transparency in supply chain management and passenger travel. With civil society, the private sector, and individuals with lived experience, counter-trafficking efforts are making a real impact.

Human trafficking – which includes forced labor and sex trafficking – does not require movement. People may be considered trafficking victims regardless of whether their trafficker transported them to an exploitative situation or compelled them to work or engage in commercial sex in their own hometown.

Ambassador Dyer also highlighted the ACHT's important suggestion for the Department of State to highlight DOT's efforts. The TIP Report reflects the State Department's assessment of efforts to meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking established under the Trafficking Victim Protections Act (TVPA) and examines governments' efforts to combat human trafficking through the prosecution, protection, and prevention framework. The TIP Office is committed to objectively assessing efforts to meet the TVPA minimum standards and to apply them consistently across the globe. The country narratives in the 2024 TIP Report highlight at least 10 countries where victims are forced to work in the transportation sector or instances when traffickers use a form of transportation to move victims. The 2024 TIP Report also highlights awareness campaigns in transportation hubs and the use of transportation to help people exit their trafficking situation.

Ambassador Dyer noted the TIP Office will continue to look for ways to highlight the transportation sector in future reports. Each year, typically in December, the TIP Office requests information from individuals and organizations working on the front lines in the fight against human trafficking, and they would appreciate hearing feedback from the ACHT as they compile next year's TIP Report. The Ambassador closed by once again thanking the committee, and Chair Saperstein expressed his gratitude to her before opening the floor for questions.

#### *Questions and Comments Received:*

- Shamere McKenzie, CEO, Sun Gate Foundation: Last week at a conference in DC, about 30 survivors were discussing survivor leadership and their different roles. One of the things they discussed was how agencies can consult with survivors as contractors, but they haven't seen survivors being hired as federal staff. What is Ambassador Dyer's

office doing to eliminate those barriers so that survivors can be employed by the federal government?

- Ambassador Dyer: The federal hiring process is inflexible, but my team shares open positions within our office with a network of survivor leaders. My office is working to use the full range of hiring authorities to promote diversity, including being inclusive of individuals with lived experience of trafficking.
- Bishop Donna Hubbard, Executive Director, Women at the Well Transition Center; Training Director, Airline Ambassadors International; Flight Attendant, American Airlines: What is the method for determining survivor leaders who are most likely to be successful in their roles? I am also interested in learning how written material by survivors and NGOs could be certified by the Department of State as guidance for counter-trafficking policies.
  - Ambassador Dyer: Sec. 115 of the Survivors of Human Trafficking Empowerment Act created the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, and the White House Presidential Personnel Office appoints members to the Council. Different Administrations do it differently. My office also engages consultants through subcontracts, but we are actively looking for additional methods of engagement. For example, when my office trains our staff on understanding trauma, we engage survivor leaders to provide that training, and much of our official guidance is survivor-authored.

Chair Saperstein ended the discussion with a recommendation that the ACHT strengthen recommendations to call for pathways to employment for survivor-leaders and thanked Ambassador Dyer for her time.

## **ACHT DRAFT REPORT REVIEW**

DFO Alkhateeb provided an overview of each section of the draft report.

The Executive Summary provides a high-level overview of the entire report, including the intersection of human trafficking and transportation, increased stakeholder engagement, and the importance of survivor-informed work. The summary also lays out the report's recommendations by category.

The Introduction covers statistics, demographics, recruitment methods, risk factors, the role of transportation, the impact of COVID-19, and the dual role of technology in facilitating or countering human trafficking.

The Legislation section identifies existing laws and international protocols to identify, track, understand, and stop human trafficking, laws focused on forced labor, and legislative authorities that expand DOT's counter-trafficking authorities. The chapter closes by calling for increased funding and amending some laws.

The Leadership and Funding section highlights public and private leadership to obligate resources, implement programs, measure impact, and engage with stakeholders to combat human trafficking. Recommendations include expanding counter-trafficking staff, funding, and strategic oversight and coordination.

The Policies and Reporting section highlights the importance of comprehensive counter-trafficking policies that address social responsibility, clear employee guidelines, reporting

protocols, supply chain monitoring, and due diligence. The section focuses on clean supply chains, international and domestic guidelines, and counter-trafficking technologies. It also highlights the need for clear reporting guidelines and the impact of hotlines, with the addition of the StrongHearts Native Helpline for this year's report. Recommendations include due diligence and zero-tolerance policies for federal contractors and private and local transportation entities.

The Partnerships section focuses on the importance of effective public and private partnerships to increase identification, share information, and maximize their collective impact. The section covers joint efforts between DOT and transportation stakeholders through the TLAHT initiative, interagency partnerships, and the DOT/DHS Blue Lighting Initiative. Recommendations include increasing partnerships at the federal level, expanding global cooperation, and increasing funding for state counter-trafficking task forces.

The Training and Awareness section highlights effective training and public awareness approaches for transportation employees and travelers to facilitate their recognition and reporting of suspected instances of human trafficking using free, survivor-informed materials that are trauma-informed, person-centered, and culturally responsive. The section includes extensive examples of multimodal activities and success stories. Recommendations include DOT expanding awareness materials, States distributing pocket cards to all frontline transportation employees, and private and local transportation entities and law enforcement implementing mandatory initial and annual training and regular awareness campaigns.

The Research, Data, and Information-Sharing section discusses gaps in how research is collected and reported, modal specificities, the types of trafficking and trafficking experiences, and the efficacy of existing programs. Recommendations include harmonizing data, facilitating increased and more uniform data collection, assessing how best to support the tracking of transport-related human trafficking crimes, adopting transport-specific intake questions, and expanding mapping tools.

The Victim and Survivor Support section highlights ways in which human trafficking impacts individuals during recruitment, exploitation, and escape, and the ways in which transportation stakeholders can provide survivor-informed, trauma-informed, person-centered, and culturally responsive support. Recommendations include establishing a unique offense code, survivor-informed and person-centered materials, and safe haven programs.

The Recommendations section includes all the previously shared recommendations broken down by category and focus areas.

The Appendices include many additional and expanded resources. There is a list of committee members, acronyms and definitions, legal definitions, existing laws, a list of state task forces, reporting hotlines, successful convictions in the transportation sector, indicators of human trafficking, model tools for a comprehensive approach that build off the 2019 modal strategy, quick implementation guides by mode of transportation, sample materials for distribution, and transportation stakeholder counter-trafficking efforts.

DFO Alkhateeb closed and initiated the lunch break, with attendees expected to return at 12:55pm for further conversation.

## **BREAK FOR LUNCH**

## **DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

Vice Chair Goetsch welcomed attendees back from lunch at 12:55. She welcomed ACHT members and subcommittee members to identify gaps in the draft and noted that edits would be incorporated into the final report to be posted online on August 30 prior to the final public ACHT meeting on September 6. At that meeting the committee would review the final report for approval.

- Tiffany Wlazlowski Neuman, Vice President, Public Affairs, NATSO: When is the deadline for submitting the report to the Secretary?
  - DFO Alkhateeb: Their report is due to Congress by November 15<sup>th</sup> and the committee is on track to submit it to the Secretary well before then.

Vice Chair Goetsch opened the floor to general discussion and comments from committee members before proceeding to a section-by-section review of the document.

### *Questions and Comments Received:*

- Bishop Donna Hubbard: Was there a survivor perspective lens on each section of the report?
  - Chair David Saperstein: There was survivor input throughout the report. While the report was not written solely from the perspective of a survivor, ACHT survivor members participated in the report's creation.
  - Vice Chair Esther Goetsch: There was survivor representation on every subcommittee and ACHT survivor leaders gave feedback on the report.

Chair Saperstein began the section-by-section review of the report, and asked committee members to voice any comments or questions. He explained that the ACHT leadership was looking for consensus on the report and would assume consensus if there were no comments raised on a section.

## **Executive Summary & Introduction**

There were no comments raised on the Executive Summary or Introduction sections.

## **Legislation**

In the Legislation section, Mary Dirksen mentioned that she thought it was comprehensive.

## **Leadership and Funding**

### *Questions and Comments Received:*

- Lori Cohen, Protect All Children from Trafficking (PACT): When the training and awareness subcommittee reviewed the awareness campaigns from the 2019 ACHT Report, they found a significant number were no longer operational because the funding had run out. There was and is a good amount of funding to initiate campaigns, but less to continue them. A separate but related issue they found was the cost of awareness campaigns for the private sector. While the government has created several free resources, such as posters, displaying those in the place of ads was a business expense. Could the report suggest more opportunities for funding models?

- Chair David Saperstein: Was the lack of funding the primary reason those campaigns shut down?
- Lori Cohen: The subcommittee had not reached out to ask. Might DOT know more?
- DFO Maha Alkhateeb: We can ask that the Federal Transit Administration review the reports of the transit grants. Awardees usually have sustained interest in continuing human trafficking awareness campaigns, and funding is the issue for most.
- Chair David Saperstein: Is funding usually time constrained?
- DFO Maha Alkhateeb: Funding is usually multiyear while within a set period.
- Vice Chair Esther Goetsch: I suggest looking through the funding recommendations for state agencies and public sector agencies to see if there is an opportunity to add wording to encourage that they provide more or longer-term funding opportunities.
- Bishop Donna Hubbard: Is it possible to collaborate with other federal agencies to modify or eliminate the background checks for survivors in the hiring process, which prevents many from getting jobs with transit, trucking, or aviation companies? Not every survivor has a criminal record, but for those who do have one as the result of their trafficking experience, they are being punished for being a victim of crime. To expand on Lori Cohen's comment about time-restricted funding, this is also a problem for grants designed to help survivors exit trafficking situations. The deadlines do not consider the time that people need to reestablish themselves, and that should be a measure of whether the grants are deemed to be successful.
  - Chair David Saperstein: It would require legislation to change regulations around background checks, and there would be reticence to modifying them because of safety concerns and legal exposure. I suggest consulting with policy advisors to develop a recommendation to direct agencies to examine their standards and adapt background checks to be sensitive to survivors' needs.
  - DFO Maha Alkhateeb: We will consult with the Department of State on the language. We will also review the funding recommendations to note the concerns about grant time frames.
  - Mary Dirksen, Senior HR Policy Analyst, Oregon Department of Transportation: I suggest framing the language to encourage agencies to analyze an applicant's background only as it has a nexus to the job duties. Some employers may use this practice already, such as the Oregon Department of Transportation.
  - Lori Cohen: Would it be a useful approach for the report to recommend supporting pending federal legislation to vacate convictions for people who were trafficked?
  - Bishop Donna Hubbard: The goal is not to have survivors going through a long legal process to expunge their backgrounds, but to have their backgrounds considered in context and to no longer be excluded from jobs for which they are otherwise qualified.
  - Vice Chair Esther Goetsch: I suggest including this under the victim and survivor recommendations in the report. I appreciated this articulation of the problem, and public and private employers should consider a nuanced approach to survivor



background checks as guidance for hiring and employment practices, rather than a blanket one-sized-fits-all rule.

- Chair David Saperstein: I agree. Could DOT staff draft initial language to include in the recommendations?

## **Policies & Reporting**

There were no committee comments raised on the Policies and Reporting Section, but Vice Chair Goetsch noted growth in this area since the 2019 report with expanded efforts to counter labor trafficking and monitor supply chains.

## **Partnerships**

There were no comments on the Partnerships section.

## **Training and Awareness**

There were no comments on the Training and Awareness section, though Vice Chair Goetsch noted that tracking metrics from training continues to be an area of growth.

## **Research, Data, and Information-Sharing**

Chair Saperstein asked if the current draft incorporated some recent research suggestions. DFO Alkhateeb said a few were still being incorporated.

## **Victim and Survivors Support**

There were no committee comments on the Victim and Survivor Support section. Vice Chair Goetsch suggested that the language on background checks could be added here once developed by DOT. Chair Saperstein thanked the committee for all the input they previously provided to help shape the current draft.

## **Recommendations**

### *Questions and Comments Received:*

- Bishop Donna Hubbard: The language throughout should reflect that actions are being done “with” survivors not “for” survivors.
  - Chair David Saperstein: All the survivor members of the committee have had input on the language. The report sections about how best to support the survivor community are phrased in a way to be done in communication with survivors.
  - Bishop Donna Hubbard: Thank you and the committee for the sensitivity to comments from survivor leaders, and I appreciate seeing how the report came together.

## **Appendices**

Chair Saperstein requested committee comments on the final section of the report, the Appendices.

### *Questions and Comments Received:*

- Lori Cohen: Appendix 11.7, Federal Human Trafficking Laws Intersecting with Transportation, did not have a section for city or local regulations. Where can it include

information on New York City's counter-trafficking regulations for cab and rideshare drivers providing trafficking training and barring anyone convicted of trafficking from getting a cab license?

- DFO Maha Alkhateeb: The information was included in the Training and Awareness Section of the report, but we could expand the part about this regulation.
- Bishop Donna Hubbard: Regarding an earlier recommendation to provide new employees with informational cards about human trafficking, I suggest that international transportation centers should also have Child ID packets to distribute to families, which collect all the information about a child in one place and can be given to authorities to speed up the investigation process if the child goes missing.
  - Chair Donna Saperstein: This could be added to the Resources section of the report.
  - DFO Maha Alkhateeb: We will check National Center on Missing and Exploited Children resources to confirm the process they use and if there are any suggestions that the report could benefit from.

There were no further committee comments on the report.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were submitted to the committee.

## **NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING**

Vice Chair Goetsch thanked the committee for their time and expertise in contributing to the report. The final report will be published online on August 30<sup>th</sup> in advance of the last committee meeting on September 6<sup>th</sup>, where the committee will review and finalize the report.

Chair Saperstein adjourned the meeting at 1:52 p.m.

We hereby certify, to the best of our knowledge, that the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

                    X                      
David Saperstein  
Chair  
ACHT

                    X                      
Maha Alkhateeb  
Designated Federal Officer  
ACHT