

DOT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING SUMMARY OF MEETING

SEPTEMBER 6, 2024

The Department of Transportation (DOT) Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking (ACHT) convened its fifth meeting at 10:30 a.m. on September 6, 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
Heather Healey, Director of Employee Assistance Programs, Association of Flight Attendants – CWA, AFL-CIO

Annika Huff, Survivor Advocate Expert

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

Sam Cho, Commission President, Port of Seattle

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

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

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

Jessica Powers, Chief Safety Office for Bus and Rail, Trinity Metro

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

OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN ATTENDANCE

Nicole Bambas

Eric Miller, American Trucking Associations

Jared Miller, CEO, Freedom Aviation Network

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Julie Abraham, Director, OST Office of International Transportation and Trade

Maha Alkhateeb, Senior Advisor and ACHT Designated Federal Officer, OST Office of International Transportation and Trade

Cindy Baraban, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs

Nicole Bumpers, Civil Rights Program Manager, FHWA Colorado Division

Nicole Cacoza, Policy Analyst, Volpe Center

Harrison Clark, Policy Analyst, Volpe Center

Audrey Farley, Associate Administrator for Administration, PHMSA

Shelia Helton-Ingram, Assistant Director, OST Office of International Transportation and Trade
Aloha Ley, Associate Director of Public Engagement, OST Office of Public Engagement
John Livingston, Security and Emergency Management Specialist, Federal Railroad Administration
Irene Marion, Director, OST Departmental Office of Civil Rights
Isaac McKeithen, Railroad Safety Specialist, FRA Office of Railroad Safety
Annie Petsonk, Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs
Elizabeth Pfenning, International Relations Specialist and ACHT Alternate Designated Federal Officer,
OST Office of International Transportation and Trade
Daniele Richards, International Relations Specialist, OST Office of International Transportation and
Trade
Kevin Wandrei, Policy Analyst, Volpe Center

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Designated Federal Officer (DFO) Maha Alkhateeb called the meeting to order, welcomed attendees, and introduced Assistant Secretary Annie Petsonk.

OPENING REMARKS

Assistant Secretary Petsonk shared her appreciation, and that of the Secretary of Transportation, for all the work done by the committee members, Subcommittee members, and DOT staff to produce the ACHT 2024 final report. She recognized the difficulty that members faced in taking time away from their work and other demands on their time in order to engage with stakeholders across the transportation sector and with lived experience experts across all levels, and she thanked the members for their work in developing the report on the challenge of preventing and responding to human trafficking. The final report identifies the unique role of the transportation sector, shares examples of best practices and existing programs, and puts forward key recommendations to further the work. Among those recommendations are suggestions for agency partnerships, tackling the important issues of sustained funding, increasing support for survivors, and focusing on the risk labor trafficking poses to transportation supply chains. Assistant Secretary Petsonk noted two recommendations of particular interest; a commercial driver's license (CDL) ban tied to trafficking convictions, and the recommendations on expanding data tools to evaluate existing and future programs. As data underpins DOT's policy work, collecting more research on human trafficking is an ongoing challenge. DOT will use this report and its recommendations to fulfill the Department's obligations under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) (P.L. 115-99) in increasing efforts to detect, deter, and counter human trafficking.

The ACHT's work sharpens the awareness of transportation sector employees across the United States. The final report will assist DOT, Congress, state DOTs, municipalities, and the private sector in their counter-trafficking work. Assistant Secretary Petsonk expressed her gratitude again for the committee's continued efforts to improve DOT's policies and programs.

Chair Saperstein thanked the Assistant Secretary for her remarks and her leadership on counter-trafficking efforts. He called the committee roll and noted that four members who could not be present at the meeting had assigned their proxy votes to him for the final adoption of the draft report.

Chair Saperstein then offered reflections on the ACHT process. He shared that the final draft of the report had 123 recommendations overall; with 29 recommendations for the DOT; 15 for Congress; 4 for other federal agencies; 24 for state DOTs and legislatures; 25 for private and local transportation entities; 15 for law enforcement agencies; 6 for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and associations; and 5 for technology companies. He thanked the staff of the DOT for their knowledge and professionalism, and for the great opportunity to work with and learn from Vice Chair Goetsch. For the ACHT members, he reminded them that in the process of creating this final draft, the report was circulated throughout the

DOT and to the federal interagency. Staff who work on human trafficking issues in the executive branch of government have already engaged with and absorbed the analysis and recommendation of the report. It will eventually reach Congress, state DOTs, law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and businesses as well. There has already been a significant impact, and far more is yet to come. Chair Saperstein wanted the ACHT members to recognize that the report has had and will have an impact.

Vice Chair Goetsch thanked Chair Saperstein for this reminder that the report has already been activated in many circles. She shared that it was an honor to serve on the ACHT during this process and work with a diverse group representing many different agencies and perspectives. She thanked Chair Saperstein for his leadership and partnership. Vice Chair Goetsch noted that when the committee convened in 2023 the thought of compiling and assessing so much information seemed like a daunting task. The ACHT members, Subcommittee members, and DOT staff's work brought together this report, which they should all be proud of. She was pleased with the way it builds on the 2019 ACHT report, offers specific recommendations at every level, and shares learning from successful efforts to build training and construct policies. Her team has already begun to use it as a learning tool to enhance their work.

MEETING FOUR MINUTES

DFO Alkhateeb directed committee members to the summary of the meeting provided in their information packets. Sam Cho moved to adopt; Leslie Richards seconded the motion. With no objections or abstentions, the minutes were adopted unanimously.

ACHT FINAL DRAFT REPORT REVIEW

Before moving to adopt the final report, Chair Saperstein highlighted the updates made to incorporate comments from the previous meeting. The drafters addressed comments from committee and Subcommittee members in the stakeholder resources section, added some missing sources, and edited the language for consistency across all sections. The following specific updates were highlighted: adding newly released National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) data; noting the role of law enforcement in identifying human smuggling and trafficking; adding New York City's counter-trafficking requirements for cabs and rideshare drivers; adding a Transportation Research Board toolkit for airports; adding research on identifying human trafficking in the maritime sector; adding the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children child identification kit; and adding a recommendation to support survivors by reducing barriers to employment. The drafters did their utmost to incorporate every comment but received a few at the very last minute that they could not address. Those were shared with DOT staff to include in future work.

Chair Saperstein and Vice Chair Goetsch went through each section of the report to review its contents before holding a vote on adopting the entire document.

Executive Summary and Introduction

The summary covers the intersection of human trafficking and transportation, highlights key takeaways from the report for increasing counter-trafficking efforts beyond training, emphasizes the importance of engaging survivors and lived experience experts, and offers an overview of the recommendations.

The introduction contains descriptive statistics about human trafficking victim demographics, risk factors, and types of abuse linked to trafficking. It further defines transportation's role in the potential facilitation of trafficking as well as the escape from trafficking, and reviews different transportation mode types. The introduction covers the growing need for research and data, how the COVID-19 pandemic increased risk factors and disrupted trafficking response efforts and communities of care, and the dual role of technology in assisting and disrupting counter-trafficking efforts.

Legislation Section

This section reviews the critical role of legislation in prosecuting traffickers and protecting victims and survivors. It lists key international human trafficking laws, with an emphasis on labor trafficking laws, DOT's counter-trafficking legislative authorities, and the role legislation can play in encouraging training and protocols.

The recommendations in this section include ensuring sufficient funding for counter-trafficking efforts. That recommendation recurs throughout the report, as there are many strong counter-trafficking efforts and not enough funding to implement them. Another recommendation involves reviewing legislation and trainings for current information about technology-mediated trafficking.

As an example of forthcoming work, Assistant Secretary Peterson noted that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act passed in May 2024 authorizes counter-trafficking grants for airports.

Leadership and Funding Section

This section highlights successful engagement between federal, private, and NGO counter-trafficking policies. It also showcases DOT leadership in promoting funding and international trafficking awareness, and the key roles played by state DOTs and state task forces. It lays out the important roles for law enforcement, private, and local entities in deterring and preventing trafficking.

The recommendations in this section include further funding for work aligned with the comprehensive human trafficking approach and expanding hiring and staffing for those organizations. It also recommends increasing the number of Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking (TLAHT) pledge signatories and expanding comprehensive counter-trafficking efforts with those signatories.

Policies and Reporting Section

This section reviews the comprehensive human trafficking policy addressing social responsibility, and it includes a section on monitoring supply chains. It has clear employee guidelines, reporting protocols, and due diligence, with examples from the DOT and other agencies.

The recommendations include enacting legislation to protect employees from retaliation for reporting trafficking, establishing zero tolerance policies with mandatory survivor informed training and employee protocols, disseminating modal policies and best practices, and implementing multimodal due diligence tools. It also recommends setting up and expanding survivor informed solutions to the misuse of technology platforms and strengthening existing counter-trafficking policies during time of disaster and emergency to protect people in times of increased vulnerability.

Partnerships Section

This section discusses effective public-private partnerships to increase information sharing and maximize impact. It highlights federal-level partnerships, state task forces, and effective partnerships in NGOs, states, and the private transportation industry.

The recommendations include establishing, increasing, and expanding partnerships between federal, state, tribal and local levels. It also recommends recognizing outstanding TLAHT partners, implementing new modal initiatives, promoting global cooperation at industry convenings, and continuing awareness-raising campaigns in January and July.

Training and Awareness Section

The section highlights effective approaches to training with freely available, survivor-informed, person-centered, culturally responsive resources and shares extensive examples of ongoing efforts. It also

recognizes the need for multilingual materials and suggests using QR codes to share information. The section includes an expanded focus on labor trafficking and a mention of the ongoing need for data.

Recommendations in this section include requiring pre-departure public service announcements about trafficking and expanding training and awareness materials to encompass the ACHT recommendations and emerging best practices. It suggests creating modal awareness toolkits and materials for displaced people with information about resources to prevent potential trafficking situations. The section also recommends that all transportation employees, contractors, and transportation license holders receive counter-trafficking training, with increased awareness around major events, and that all frontline employees at transportation hubs, including maintenance staff, get access to training materials and toolkits.

Research, Data, and Information Sharing Section

This section includes varied and growing research on transportation and trafficking and the current gaps in the data. The gaps identified include a lack of information on modal specificity, types of trafficking and trafficking experiences, efficacy of existing programs, state legislation, centralized tracking, evaluation of programs and campaigns, and offense codes that systematically address trafficking.

The recommendations in this section include harmonizing existing data sets, facilitating the increase and consistency of data collection, assessing how best to support human trafficking related crimes, adopting human trafficking intake questions for law enforcement, and expanding mapping tools.

Victim and Survivor Support Section

Chair Saperstein noted that survivor informed efforts touch all the report sections, but that this section was of special consideration.

The section includes information on the way that trafficking impacts individuals and how transport affects people during their recruitment, period of exploitation, and escape. It focuses on increasing materials about and accessibility of transportation for survivors, both in their exit from trafficking and going forwards in their lives.

Recommendations from this section include pursuing legislation to protect survivors from penalties, debts, or fines stemming from criminal proceedings linked to their trafficking. Other recommendations include engaging service providers to set up human trafficking materials, providing trauma-informed and person-centered materials, and hiring people with lived experiences. Similarly, the section states that law enforcement agencies should create a unique human trafficking tracking code during intake; transportation hubs and companies should implement safe harbor protocols and programs, install call buttons in facilities, and set up or expand hiring and workforce development programs for survivors of trafficking; transportation companies should also set up or expand programs to donate points or travel vouchers for trafficking survivors; and transportation companies should provide guidance to survivors on how to access those vouchers. The recommendations also encourage transportation providers to take steps to prevent their platforms from being used for trafficking.

Appendices

The appendices contain information to supplement the report. The content of the appendices include the committee and Subcommittee rosters; a list of common acronyms; definitions of common terms; the federal legal definition of human trafficking; a list of federal, state and territorial trafficking laws that intersection with transportation; a list of state human trafficking task forces; contact information for reporting hotlines; a summary of successful federal human trafficking convictions with transportation; modal trafficking indicators; modal tools such as a comprehensive strategy; organization proclamation

and leadership statement; quick implementation guides; sample materials; and a list of transportation stakeholders counter-trafficking efforts.

APPROVAL OF REPORT

Chair Saperstein noted that with the report fully summarized, it was time to move for adoption. Sam Cho moved that the committee adopt the report as written; Heather Healy seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the floor. The final vote was unanimously in favor of adoption, with Earlyne Alexander, Sam Cho, Esther Goetsch, Heather Healy, Annika Huff, James Lewis, Shamere McKenzie, Leslie Richards, and Derrick Waters, and Tiffany Wlazlowski Neuman voting to approve and Chair Saperstein voting to approve as proxy for Mary Dirksen, Casey French, Michael Krumm, and Brad White.

COMMITTEE MEMBER REFLECTIONS

Vice Chair Goetsch offered a chance for members to reflect on the process. Questions focused on the value added to the field by the 2024 ACHT report, ACHT member takeaways and learning, implementation, and next steps relevant to ACHT members' fields and modes, and the ways in which ACHT members have already incorporated the work of the report.

Earlyne Alexander shared her experience teaching port sector employees about the prevalence of human trafficking and her intent to share the report with these employees. She also expressed her excitement at the possibility of seeing some of the Subcommittee's recommendations included in the 2024 FAA Reauthorization and underscored the importance of gathering more data on trafficking, as highlighted in the report.

Sam Cho thanked the DOT staff, ACHT members, and Subcommittee members for their support and hard work. He expressed his excitement to see the universal nature of counter-trafficking efforts across modes, agencies, and geographies and indicated he has learned a lot from the process that he will be incorporating in his own work. Cho was particularly enthused by the reporting, anti-retribution, and trafficking identification recommendations of the report.

Heather Healy shared from her personal experiences working with airline union members. She highlighted the need for collective bargaining agreements to include standards and procedures for human trafficking reporting. She expressed her excitement for mode-specific guides to identify trafficking. Annika Huff shared her belief that the report meaningfully fills gaps in existing research, engagement efforts, and modal approaches.

Jim Lewis underscored the importance of continuing the research and ACHT engagement efforts even following the report's finalization. He also expressed that he has found personal meaning through participation in this ACHT and intends to distribute the report to senior leadership at Amtrak.

Shamere McKenzie thanked the ACHT for their work and expressed her belief that this work provides a good example of survivor leadership. She proposed webinars or meetings with engaged partners in order to promote the recommendations of the report and help partners incorporate best practices. She thanked Kezban Yagci Sokat for her assistance, leadership, and kindness.

Tiffany Wlazlowski Neuman emphasized her intent to distribute the report to NATSO members and her belief that the report would be an especially beneficial tool for transportation organizations beginning counter-trafficking efforts and widening existing efforts. She shared her excitement around the data-focused recommendations in the report and the potential partnerships with law enforcement that the report makes possible.

Leslie Richards indicated her appreciation for the work of all members, especially those on the Research and Data Subcommittee. She shared that she will be sending the report to front-line employees at SEPTA, as well as legislative committees in Pennsylvania.

Julie Abraham thanked DOT staff in the Office of International Transportation and Trade who had worked with the ACHT to pull the report together, underscored the importance of the overall effort, and her appreciation for each member.

DFO Alkhateeb thanked all the committee members, subcommittee members, and staff involved in putting together the report, including colleagues from the Volpe Center. She also highlighted labor trafficking, clean supply chains, and tracking data, as important aspects of the report.

Derrick Waters shared how the report had expanded his view of human trafficking beyond his own experience in bus transportation and his surprise at how simple and inexpensive taking the first steps toward stopping human trafficking can be. In response to Chair Saperstein's offer that, for the record, he affirms his support for the report, Waters did so.

Finally, Chair Saperstein indicated how fulfilling he has found his work with counter-trafficking efforts since the passage of the original Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) legislation and how impressive the growth of the government and NGO spaces he has experienced throughout his engagement with counter-trafficking initiatives and partnerships. He again thanked all who participated, including members of the public and Subcommittee members who provided feedback and guidance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Donna Hubbard shared her admiration for the ACHT, including the DOT staff and Subcommittee chair Sam Cho. She expressed her enthusiasm for this ACHT's inclusion of survivor leader voices, underscored her efforts to promote outreach to flight attendants, and her support for a summary version of the report to be distributed widely across modes.

Kezban Yagci Sokat thanked the members of the ACHT and Subcommittees for the opportunity to contribute to the report. She thanked the DOT team and Research and Data Subcommittee, and she indicated her excitement to see the implementation of the actions recommended in the report.

Margo Hill-Ferguson expressed her gratitude to all on the ACHT. She plans to share the report with the Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Unit at the Department of Justice in the near future.

CLOSING REMARKS

Chair Saperstein referenced a phrase from the Jewish tradition with the hope that all attendees go "from strength to strength" as they go forward with this new knowledge and their renewed commitment. He also wished such strength to all those who have been or continue to be victims of trafficking.

Chair Saperstein concluded the meeting at 12:17 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