



The Cleveland Backpage Report

An Analysis of Human Trafficking and the Online
Commercial Sex Industry in Northeast Ohio

A Collaborative Research Project Between Operation
Broken Silence and the Imagine Foundation

2011

Operation



Broken Silence



**THE IMAGINE
FOUNDATION**

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References to internet web sites (URLs) were accurate at the time of writing. Neither the Imagine Foundation nor Operation Broken Silence is responsible for URLs that may have expired or changed since the report was prepared.

This study is dedicated to Sita and all of her brothers and sisters.

I hope that someday research like this isn't necessary.

Until that day, we'll continue to be your voice.

I promise.

- JB

Operation Broken Silence

Operation Broken Silence is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit composed of abolitionists from different backgrounds who speak out against the growing threats of mass atrocities and modern slavery.

OBS was founded in 2007 in response to the genocide committed by the Sudanese government in Darfur, Sudan. Since then, our mission has grown to encompass human trafficking prevention and solutions while continuing to combat genocide and mass atrocities. Our focus issues are some of the most distressing crises of our time.

You can learn more about OBS and our campaigns against the online sex industry by visiting our website at www.operationbrokensilence.org.

The Imagine Foundation

The Imagine Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization registered in Cleveland, Ohio. Our goal is to spread awareness and promote solutions for ending child slavery worldwide. We came together as an organization to equip and empower individuals and organizations to end the worst human rights violation in history, modern-day slavery.

Please visit us online to learn ways that you can help to end slavery and human trafficking at www.imaginefreedom.org.

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Acknowledgments

A heartfelt and most sincere thank you to:

Anonymous Researcher MB	Anonymous Researcher MM
Anonymous Researcher DN	Anonymous Researcher KL
Anonymous Researcher LP	Anonymous Researcher AH
Anonymous Researcher MP	Anonymous Researcher RD

Anonymous Researcher KM
Anonymous Researcher IBM
Anonymous Researcher JS
Anonymous Research SP

SJ Photography

The Imagine Foundation

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to raise awareness of human trafficking and forced prostitution taking place within the online commercial sex industry of northeast Ohio. While the data will not always cite specific examples of human trafficking or forced prostitution, it addresses the supply of commercial sex advertised on cleveland.backpage.com and its connection to human trafficking.

Commercial sex is illegal in Ohio. Despite its illegality, commercial sex can be easily and anonymously purchased while browsing the escort classifieds on Backpage. For this reason, we can confidently claim that Backpage is profiting from illegal enterprises and illicit trade. The escort classifieds are often used as a vessel for human trafficking and forced prostitution.

This Cleveland Backpage Report exposes the connection between the online sex industry and human trafficking in Cleveland, Ohio and provides solutions for citizens, policy makers, law enforcement, and NGOs.

Executive Summary

October 1, 2011

The purpose of this study is to raise awareness of the ongoing human trafficking and forced prostitution in the online commercial sex industry of northeast Ohio. Between May and July of 2011, the Imagine Foundation emulated research methodology provided by Operation Broken Silence in order to better understand the scope of commercial sex and supply of sex workers into the Cleveland area. This document contains the findings of our research and partnership.

Although commercial sex is illegal in Ohio, many women are advertised as escorts and solicit themselves for commercial sex through online classified ads listed on www.cleveland.backpage.com (Backpage). Many ads represent area codes foreign to Cleveland, an indicator that commercial sex is migrating through the region. Sex trafficking, or coerced commercial sex, can be found among the classified ads on Backpage. On September 21, 2010, a consortium of state attorney generals sent a letter to Backpage requesting the immediate removal of its adult services to end the “misery of the women and children who may be exploited and victimized” (Attorney General, 2010). Exploitation and victimization can readily be found within the highly sexualized online environment that Backpage allows, often resulting in coerced commercial sex.

The following research explains the relationship between the supply of commercial sex workers and sex trafficking, particularly in their relationship to online solicitation through a classified website like Backpage. In response, we recommend three solutions: (1) Backpage should immediately close their adult services classified ads, (2) Policy makers are encouraged to continue to pass legislation in Ohio that protects victims and provides harsher penalties for traffickers and johns, and (3) Law enforcement, state services, and NGOs are encouraged to facilitate victim protection through unified rehabilitation efforts, ultimately transforming victims into survivors.

We look forward to working with all of you on this important issue.

Ryan Dalton
Director, Anti-Trafficking Operations
Operation Broken Silence

Jesse Bach
Executive Director
The Imagine Foundation

Goal Statements

The goals of the Cleveland Backpage study are to:

- Build awareness of human trafficking and forced prostitution in Ohio.
- Pressure Backpage to censor or remove its adult ads, thereby eliminating the function of the website as an advertiser for human trafficking and forced prostitution in Ohio and nationwide.
- Call on the Ohio community and business leaders to voluntarily train their employees in anti-trafficking efforts.
- Aid law enforcement and policy makers in their efforts to end human trafficking and forced prostitution in Ohio.
- Advance toward Cleveland becoming a slave-free city.

Introduction

On January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation, an executive order issued by President Lincoln to abolish slavery within the Union, began a process of abolition continued today. Two years later, the 13th Amendment made illegal all current and future forms of slavery and involuntary servitude. Section 1 of the 13th Amendment requires that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction" (U.S. Const. amend. XIII, sec.1).

Despite slavery being illegal within the United States and abroad, the flesh trade continues even now. Current research indicates between 12.3 million (Belser, 2009) and 27 million (Bales, 2007) people are enslaved worldwide. This estimation, compared to the global population of 6.7 billion, suggests that roughly 1 in every 350 global citizens find themselves in one of the various forms of slavery. To put this number in perspective, modern forms of slavery represent more than twice the number robbed of their freedom during the entire 350 years of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Skinner, 2008).

While this number is atrocious and represents a blemish on human history, there is one redeeming statistic. Slaves are now a smaller percentage of the overall human population than at any other time in human history (Bales, 2007).

Slavery exists when one is "forced to work through fraud or threat of violence for no money beyond subsistence (Skinner, 2008)." In response to this growing crime, the United Nations created the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, also known as the Palermo Protocol or the Trafficking Protocol, in 2000. The protocol defines human trafficking as:

"[T]he recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation" (United Nations, 2000).

To define it succinctly, slavery is economic exploitation, which is used to increase profits within a given industry at the expense of the freedom of those exploited.

<p>Slave: Someone who is forced to work through fraud or threat of violence for no money.</p> <p>Human Trafficking: The act of coercing a person into a form of slavery.</p> <p>Trafficked Victim: A person who has become, or is in the process of becoming a slave.</p> <p>Trafficker: One who delivers a person into one of the forms of slavery.</p> <p>Pimp: An individual who controls women involved in the sale of commercial sex.</p> <p>John: An individual who purchases commercial sex</p>
--

Modern slavery falls into four categories:

- Agricultural Labor
- Forced Prostitution
- Domestic Servitude
- Child Soldiery

The U.S. State Department estimates that as many as 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year and forced into agricultural work, prostitution, domestic service, or sweatshop labor (Congressional Research Service, 2010). The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported that 100,000 U.S. children were estimated

to be at risk for trafficking into commercial sex (State of Ohio, 2010). Due to limitations in current data, there is no accurate number of American born persons trafficked into forced labor or adults trafficked into forced prostitution.

This document focuses specifically on human trafficking within the United States. Victims that find themselves transported within the U.S. borders are usually coerced into slavery by one of the following scenarios:

1. The Migrant Worker

Mexican smugglers, or “coyotes,” often arrange to sneak an undocumented worker across the border for employment. The victim pays the coyote to guide him along hidden smuggling routes to avoid detection by the U.S. Border Patrol. The coyote then delivers the unsuspecting individual into enslavement as part of a bait-and-switch tactic. Victims often find that the job they were promised does not exist or that, if the job does exist, they are not being paid. The coyote may threaten both the victim and the victim’s family if the new job is not performed. Victims are often unable to call for help because they are undocumented, do not speak the local language, and/or in fear of their family being harmed. Consequently, many quietly resign themselves to the new life into which they have been tricked because they feel powerless.

2. The Boyfriend Approach

Traffickers are some of the most clever manipulators simply because they know the vulnerabilities of insecure youth and practice exploiting those vulnerabilities for their own gain. A young girl or boy may often find friendship through the manipulative acceptance of a pimp or trafficker. Malls, schools, or social media are common venues to initiate contact because they attract a younger demographic. Once this initial contact is made, the trafficker or pimp begins building trust through constant communication and flattery. Finally, after trust is established, the victims may be asked to sell themselves or beaten into submission through a process called “breaking in.” There are numerous cases of younger people being trafficked from their own homes in fear of their lives or the lives of their families. Direct threats and force are not usually the prevailing methods. The victims may also feel compelled to prostitute themselves because she fears rejection by the trafficker, whom she sees as a boyfriend who cares for her. The subtle manipulation found in this approach develops Stockholm syndrome in the victim, a form of coercive control in which the perpetrator instills in the victim fear as well as gratitude for being allowed to live or for any other perceived favors, however small (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2009).

3. Kidnapping and Abduction

Direct force is less common, yet still used by traffickers. Victims are sometimes kidnapped, taken to an unfamiliar area, and forced to prostitute themselves. They are constantly monitored and accompanied in order to prohibit an escape. Drugs and alcohol are used as tools for control. Once the victim is hooked on a substance, he or she will prostitute to afford the next high. This further strengthens the traffickers’ control over the victim and simultaneously mitigates the need for future force.

The question often arises: “Why don’t the victims just run away?” There is no simple answer for this; the easiest explanation is a combination of fear and conditioning. If a victim fears for their lives or the lives of their family, then they will continue to obey in order to protect them. Similarly, if the victim is conditioned through force, fraud, or coercion, he or she will continue to perform the

actions demanded of them.

A Decade of Protection: The TVPA

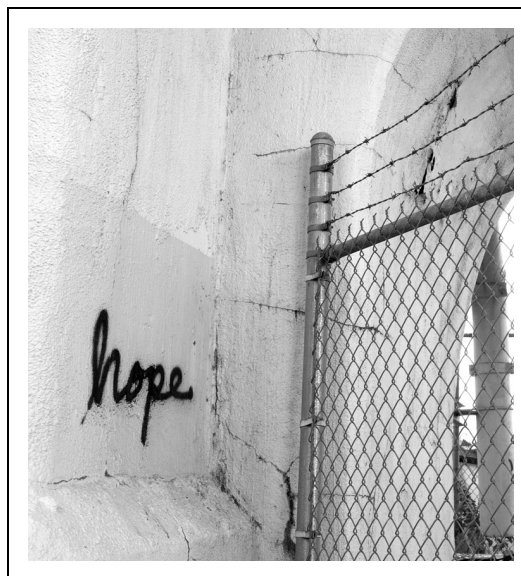
In 2000, the United States government passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which expounded upon the freedoms granted by the 13th Amendment. As one of the TVPA's provisions, the Trafficking In Persons office (TIP) was established.

“The Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, directed by Ambassador Luis CdeBaca, leads the United States’ global engagement against human trafficking, an umbrella term used to describe the activities involved when someone obtains or holds a person in compelled service. At the heart of this phenomenon are the myriad forms of enslavement as outlined in the United States’ Trafficking Victims Protection Act. Major forms of human trafficking include: forced labor, sex trafficking, bonded labor, debt bondage, involuntary domestic servitude, forced child labor, child soldiers, and child sex trafficking. The Office has responsibility for bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, targeted foreign assistance, and public engagement on this issue of modern slavery and partners with foreign governments and civil society to develop and implement effective counter-trafficking strategies” (Trafficking in Persons Report, 2011).

The primary protective measure for victims in the United States is the TVPA, the federal guidelines used to rescue and restore the victims of trafficking while also punishing those who trafficked victims into one of the forms of modern slavery (Trafficking in Persons Report, 2011). The TVPA was initially passed in 2000 and subsequently reauthorized in 2003, 2005, 2008 and is pending renewal in 2011.

The Trafficking in Persons Report is the most comprehensive resource on global trafficking and efforts to combat it. The TIP Report ranks countries on a multi-tiered system, which indexes the efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons by foreign governments and the United States. This annual report is the main diplomatic tool by which the United States government fights slavery, forced labor, and trafficking in persons worldwide.

The majority of cases brought to trial are charged under federal statutes. Even though many governmental agencies are working to eliminate trafficking and slavery, the number of prosecutions and convictions are miniscule compared to the prevalence of the crime.



Kevin Bales, Director of Free the Slaves, compares trafficking against murder cases in his 2009 book *The Slave Next Door*. According to U.S. State Department estimates, around 17,500 are trafficked into slavery within American borders in any given year (Congressional Research Service, 2010). Coincidentally, there are around the same number of murders in the United States annually. The national success rate of murder case prosecutions is around 70%, meaning that around 11,000 murder cases are cleared each year. By contrast, in 2006, federal human trafficking charges were

made against 111 people, 98 of whom were convicted. The U.S. Government's own estimations of 17,500 foreign-born individuals trafficked into the country means that roughly less than 1% of human trafficking and slavery perpetrators are brought to justice.¹

Modern Abolition - The Second Abolition

By most accounts, the modern abolition movement in the United States is about ten years old, beginning with the initial passing of the TTVPA and continuing still today. During the past decade, numerous governmental and non-profit agencies have started to tackle one of the worst human rights violations in history, modern day slavery. It's important to note that slavery and human trafficking are happening right below the surface of modern life. Human trafficking is the second fastest growing crime in the world next to the drug trade, yet trafficking is much less known than the drugs and arms trades.

The following pages of this document will give you an introduction to one form of slavery—sex trafficking. The details in this report are intended to encapsulate the scope of human trafficking in Cleveland and Ohio and provide solutions for those interested in joining the second abolition.

¹ Further research concerning prosecution rates can help reveal how many victims are trafficked per trafficker in order to determine what percentage of traffickers are convicted. Most traffickers probably transport more than one victim.

Human Trafficking in Ohio

Human trafficking is a regional crime that manifests itself differently in any given region. For instance, aspects of sex trafficking in Miami may represent a different demographic than that of Los Angeles or New York. The mafia may control and move victims in one city while gangs may have a stronger influence in another. Local pimps may dominate street victims in a decentralized or unsophisticated network. In order to best combat trafficking, advocates must understand what the crime looks like and how it is developing in their own region. Research released by the Ohio Trafficking in Persons Study Commission exposed the extent of human trafficking in Ohio and introduced practical steps that can be taken toward its abolition.

Ohio Trafficking In Persons Study Subcommittee Report

The Ohio Trafficking in Persons Study subcommittee released an exhaustive detailing of the origins of human trafficking and how it passed into Ohio and through the state for the purposes of adapting state law and state resources toward combating the trade.² According to the study, Ohio is a destination state for foreign-born trafficking victims. Traffickers are able to move victims from all over the world, as nearby as Mexico and as distant as Asia, to the cities of Ohio. The authors speculate that victims arrive through the porous border between the United States and Canada and are trafficked into Ohio through Michigan. Once the victims arrive, they are often placed in poorly regulated industries that employ cheap labor, a perfect scenario for the trafficker to abuse. Immigrant communities, which are increasing in Ohio, are particularly vulnerable to the lure of a trafficker. For many immigrants, the fear of being deported is greater than the initial anxiety of trusting a suspicious person offering them a job.

Ohio is also an origin state for domestic victims of sex and labor trafficking. Toledo, Ohio, is feared to be a nexus for the crime. The authors explain that

“Toledo is currently number four in the nation in terms of the number of arrests, investigations, and rescue of domestic minor sex trafficking victims among U.S. cities (Northwest Ohio Innocence Lost Task Force, 2009). The top three cities are Miami (city population 404,048; county population 2,398,245), Portland (city population 537,081; county population 714,567) and Las Vegas (city population 552,539; county population 1,865,746). Given that the city of Toledo’s population is 298,446 and Lucas County’s is 440,456, this area can be considered to lead the nation for the number of traffickers produced and the number of victims recruited into the sex trade per capita based on 2008 U.S. Census estimates.”

The authors go on to explain that part of the reason Toledo is so progressive in the number of arrests compared to other cities is the education that the state provides to law enforcement and members of the community. The study then exposes how networks of human trafficking, whether for commercial sex or for labor, have developed in Ohio and indicate some factors that have led to the growth of these networks. Women are mostly trafficked by these networks for forced commercial sex, the aspect of trafficking relevant to this report. The following table was published in the Ohio subcommittee report and does an excellent job explaining the relationship between

²The methodology used to find this data was produced by the authors of the Ohio Trafficking in Persons Study Subcommittee Report. The below charts and data are not the original production of OBS or the Imagine Foundation. We recommend reading the subcommittee report for further analysis and explanation of trafficking in Ohio.

undocumented people groups in Ohio and how trafficking has made an impact on them.

Table 4: Undocumented Females who are At-Risk & Trafficked into the Sex or Labor Market in Ohio

Group	# at-risk	Percent Trafficked	Number of Those Trafficked	Trafficked for Sex & Labor
Hispanic	571	20%	114	80 Sex and/or 34 Labor
Asian	1424	30%	427	299 Sex and/or 128 Labor
Black	220	20%	44	37 Sex and/or 16 Labor
White	373	20%	75	101 Sex and/or 43 Labor
Total	2,588		660	517 Sex and/or 218 Labor

Undocumented females in Ohio, whether smuggled in through the Canadian border or the Mexican border, are at great risk to be trafficked or have already been trafficked into the state. Traffickers use subtle manipulation and deceit to keep control over their victims. It is not uncommon to hear a story of a victim who was told that the police would harm her if she was found to be in the country illegally. This fear is very real for immigrant women who have come from origin countries with corrupt law enforcement which may actually harm citizens without warning.

The second population of vulnerable people, runaway youth, are equally susceptible to being trafficked. Youth that are runaways, throwaways (youth which are forced to leave their homes), or homeless are not well protected, whether physically or psychologically. Traffickers are adept at manipulation and are able to identify insecurity or desperation readily. Many victims are less reluctant to sell themselves to survive or are coerced into trading sex after spending more than two weeks out on the streets. The following chart from the subcommittee explains the relationship of these youth in Ohio to human trafficking:

Table 8: Runaway Youth in Ohio who are At-Risk & Traded Sex

Year	Number Runaways in Ohio	Number Gone for 2wks or Longer	Those who Traded Sex 20%
2009	20,205	3,056	611
2008	11,498	2,749	550
2007	11,573	3,609	722
2006	25,163	4,244	849
2005	10,801	3,340	669

At-risk youth and undocumented immigrants are vulnerable to traffickers in any region; the stories of abuse are retold by persons represented by these populations time and time again. Ohio is not an exception.

What is Backpage?

Backpage is an online classifieds website that is very similar to Craigslist. A visitor to Backpage can find nearly anything, from household items to jobs and services. Posting an ad is simple; just sign up for an account, provide an email and a phone number for verification, and begin selling. For the average user of Backpage, the website is very useful and convenient.

Unfortunately, not only are cars and lawn mowers being sold here, but people as well. Johns use Backpage to find prostitution. Some women advertise willingly as prostitutes, however the advertisements also contain victims of slavery and human trafficking. Modern day slavery is not a relic of the Civil War era, and it does not only occur in distant countries. It still exists today in the United States, and it can be found among the ads of Backpage. The website contains an adult section that has been the focus of media scrutiny since the removal of Craigslist's adult section. Craigslist removed their adult section after extensive pressure from attorney general offices throughout the United States, and now it appears the illicit industry has migrated to Backpage. Unfortunately, the same pressure that Craigslist yielded to has not been successful in convincing Backpage to close down their adult services section.

The Attorney Generals' Fight Against Backpage

On September 21, 2010 the State Attorney Generals from Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia sent a letter to Backpage and their parent company, Village Voice Media.

“We are writing to request that you immediately take down the adult services portion of [B]ackpage. We believe that ads for prostitution—including ads trafficking children—are rampant on the site and that the volume of these ads will grow in light of [C]raigslist’s recent decision to eliminate the adult services section of its site. In our view, it is time for the company to follow [C]raigslist’s lead and take immediate action to end the misery of the women and children who may be exploited and victimized by these ads. Because [B]ackpage cannot, or will not, adequately screen these ads, it should stop accepting them altogether. . . . We sincerely hope [B]ackpage, like [C]raigslist, will finally hear the voices of the victims, women and children, who plead with it to make this important change. We too, call on [B]ackpage to listen, to care, and respond now by shutting down the adult services section of its website. It is the right thing to do to protect innocent women and children” (State Attorney Generals, 2010).

Backpage's Response

Backpage responded to the Attorney General's with non-compliance. From Backpage:

“Backpage.com respectfully declines the recent demand by a group of 21 state attorneys general that it close its adult classifieds website. Backpage.com is a legal business and operates its website in accordance with all applicable laws. Censorship will not create public safety nor will it rid the world of exploitation” (Bangor Daily News, 2010).

Backpage is right when they claim they are operating within the law. The problem is that Backpage is allowing the use of their website by criminals and are not regulating the use of this activity with much success. The effect of lack of regulation is that illicit markets can be found among legitimate trading, thus blurring the line between solicited services that are legal or illegal. Backpage, for most, is an online classified listing similar to what can be seen in newspapers around the country. We are not concerned with the trade in legitimate goods and services that are offered by Backpage. We are concerned with the rampant use of Backpage as a haven for the advertisement of commercial sex, especially if forced.

Commercial Sex and the Internet

For most, imagery surrounding sex trafficking and prostitution is narrowly defined to brothels and massage parlors. Additionally, when most people think of prostitution and purchasing commercial sex, they imagine women walking strolls in dangerous neighborhoods and dirty parts of town. While this still continues, the illicit trades of prostitution and sex trafficking are beginning to move away from these traditional methods. The two greatest driving forces are risk and convenience. Finding commercial sex on the internet diminishes risk and increases convenience for both the pimp and the john. It is here that the battle against this crime must continue.

The world is becoming increasingly connected by the internet. Commodities are exchanged between nations in ways not possible before globalization's impact on trade. The business of human trafficking is no exception. Traffickers are able to use the internet to move people, like any other commodity, whether internationally or locally. The added benefit of the internet for the trafficker is that his or her risk will decrease if the victim is sold online. Tying an illegal network to a specific geographic location like a brothel is riskier than selling a person through the anonymity of the internet. The entire transaction can be arranged after the john makes the selection through the internet and then places a call to the victim. As a result, transactions like this are nearly impossible to detect. They are very convenient for both the purchaser and the seller, and the fear of being caught drops significantly.

The result of the movement of commercial sex away from the streets and to the internet is that the market for commercial sex is more readily available and protected from law enforcement and the public. To fight this crime, abolitionists must look beyond traditional ideas of human trafficking and slavery; we now have to fight this crime on the internet.

Escort Classifieds on Backpage

The girl in the ad below is Samantha. Her age is listed as 19 years old and she is selling herself or being forcibly sold for commercial sex on Backpage. Her advertisement is showcased because it is representative of the thousands of advertisements for commercial sex available on Backpage.

The first element of the ad that strikes the eye is her picture. While this may be shocking to find on a classifieds website, it is only recently that Backpage removed full nude advertisements. As is typical, her measurements and features are listed as a commodity and the end user is instructed to “call for donations.” This is one of many code words or phrases used to passively express a request for money exchanged for commercial sex. As prostitution and human trafficking are illegal in Ohio, a solicitor cannot simply list a dollar amount requesting compensation for sexual activity. Postings also indirectly request compensation by asking for diamonds, roses and seashells as similar code words for money.

Samantha requires “outcall” service only, meaning that she will travel to meet the john at the location they choose. This is different from an “incall” where the john must travel to the girl’s location. A male driver often accompanies the girls that perform “outcalls” for both protection and control. Many advertisements list the prostitute as “independent,” or there is no driver, pimp or trafficker involved.

Samantha may be a 19-year-old girl performing commercial sex acts for her own profit or she may be a trafficked victim who desperately needs help. Lack of useful, consistent, and thorough regulation on Backpage means that we will not know if she is a trafficking victim or a willing prostitute.

backpage.com cleveland, oh free classifieds

[Post an Ad](#)

[backpage.com](#) > [cleveland adult entertainment](#) > [cleveland escorts](#)

☀️ Rainy Day Specials ☀️ ○ **YOUR ♥ DREAM ♥ GIRL** ○ - 19 [report ad](#)

posted: April 4, 2011, 06:48 PM

Reply: [click here](#)

▼ Samantha ▼
■ (216)624-3658 ■ Im a sexy little brunette with a hott azz body
19 years old Long dark hair, Bright green eyes, 34c, 125lbs
Im a sexy & sweet package all wrapped in one just for you!!


- ▶ Call For Donations ◀
- ▶ I have very Sp3cial rates just for tonite!! ◀
- ▶ You Won't Regret It!! ◀

▼ Sammy ▼

Poster's age: 19

- Location: ♥ outcall only up late ♥
- Post ID: 6514929 cleveland

[Email this ad to a friend](#)



Escort Ads and Human Trafficking

The man in the below picture was arrested on federal charges of sex trafficking of a child. His name is Timothy Davis, a.k.a. "Jhon." The Cleveland Plain Dealer reported on June 2, 2011, that he was arrested for selling a 16-year-old girl for sex on "a website notorious for peddling prostitutes" (Cleveland.com, 2011).

During an interview, the 16-year-old girl reported that Davis had threatened to "make her life a living hell" if she didn't work as a prostitute for him.

As a result of our research on Backpage and daily monitoring of the ads, we were able to identify these ads as suspicious and report Jhon to local and federal authorities. On May 6, 2011, we came across four advertisements on Backpage that were suspect for human trafficking. All four advertisements were linked to the same phone number. Additionally, scheduling for the services had to be done through Jhon, which is often an indicator of coercion or manipulation. Our suspicions were confirmed once the news of Jhon's arrest became public.

Because illicit trade has heavily migrated to the internet, non-profits have an unprecedented opportunity to work as an ally for law enforcement. Sex ads that are readily accessible from the home computer, not only provide anonymity for the trafficker and the john but also safety for the advocate. Abolitionists no longer have to look any further than their own computer to begin monitoring for trafficked victims. The NGO sector can conveniently aggregate the combined vigilance of those willing to monitor these ads as means of supporting local law enforcement, especially if the efforts and resources of those officials are already stretched. Finding patterns of illicit trade and reporting it, in some cases, results in successful arrests and freedom for victims. Below is one of Jhon's advertisements. Notice that the victim's face is not shown.



Timothy Davis - "Jhon"

[backpage.com](#) > [cleveland adult entertainment](#) > [cleveland escorts](#)

|| ▶ (**BOOBY LOVERS**) hot girl LATINA ◀ || — - 26 [report ad](#)

posted: May 5, 2011, 06:19 PM

If you have the desire and time for an alluring encounter you will never be disappointed with the experience that awaits you! I let our chemistry and individual time together determine where our minds and bodies wander. I'm open-minded and make it a priority to fulfill your every desire and melt your body with my tender, yet skillful. GINA

TO BOOK APPOINTMENT MUST SCHEDULE WITH MY SCHEDULE ASSISTANT JHON @ 202-236-6255

Poster's age: 26

- Location: Cleveland
- Post ID: 5615507 cleveland

[Email this ad to a friend](#)

Two photographs of a woman wearing a black, form-fitting bodysuit with intricate lace detailing. The top image is a close-up of her back and shoulders, showing the lace pattern. The bottom image is a full-body shot of her standing, showing the bodysuit from the front and side.

Research Methodology

During May of 2011, OBS and the Imagine Foundation began collaboration to assemble a team of Cleveland residents who volunteered as auditors and data extractors. Each volunteer extracted data from Backpage and recorded it in a Google Documents spreadsheet. Using Google Documents allowed our team the convenience of logging in and editing a common spreadsheet, as opposed to circulating a document in email, editing it, and passing it along to the next team member, thus potentially sacrificing accuracy. Simultaneous access to each month's spreadsheet for each member allowed consistent and timely data extraction.

This methodology has successfully been used in a previous Backpage study in Memphis, Tennessee during the fourth quarter of 2010. OBS researchers and data analysts determined that the following fields needed to be included in the spreadsheet in order to most fully grasp the scope of online commercial sex in the analyzed region:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Advertised Location | 8. Phone number |
| 2. Advertised Age | 9. Phone number #2 |
| 3. Name of Poster | 10. Post ID 2 (Duplicate Posts) |
| 4. Post ID #1 (As assigned by Backpage) | 11. Post ID 3 (Duplicate Posts) |
| 5. Suspected Minor | 12. Girls advertised by escort agency |
| 6. \$ per hour incall | 13. Audit Field |
| 7. \$ per hour outcall | 14. Notes |

Each of these fourteen fields and their respective data, when considered together, are most necessary to understand the scope of online prostitution. We recognize that this does not mean *all* prostitution in Cleveland, but only female prostitution advertised through a commonly accessible online resource (Backpage). Other websites also offer adult classifieds, but Backpage not only has the highest frequency of posts but also greater website traffic (user hits) than alternative choices. Additionally, the data does not account for prostitution that is solicited on the streets only.

Inclusion Criteria

To ensure accuracy, eliminate spam ads, and establish a clear understanding of the scope of online commercial sex in Cleveland, the following criteria served as the filters for the type of classified ads pulled from Backpage and scrutinized within our research methods:

1. Ads posted by a female and/or of a female.
2. Ads posted by escort services.
3. Ads posted within the assessment window, between May 1st and July 31st.
4. All ads within the 216, 330, and 440 area codes.
5. All ads advertised east of Elyria, west of Ashtabula, and north of Akron.

All ads that met each of the above criteria and were indexed in Cleveland.Backpage.com were recorded.

Exclusion Criteria

Some ads listed under the Cleveland escort services are not useful in understanding the scope of online commercial sex from a supply side approach. The following types of ads were not recorded during the assessment window:

1. Any ads composed by males soliciting sex.
2. Spam ads.
3. Advertisements for massage parlors, jobs, or any service unrelated to escort ads.
4. Warning ads – Posts that claim an escort ripped off the to-be purchaser of sex.
5. The “Suspected Minor” field was not factored into any data calculations.

All ads that did not match the inclusion criteria were excluded during the recording window. Analysis of the raw data also verified these exclusions.

Research Results

On August 1st, the research team finished collecting data and each auditor completed accuracy verification for each ad. Next, the raw data was delivered to an analyst who used Microsoft Excel to sort and filter all the data into useful information. Pivot tables were used to process nearly every field. The raw data and our methodology are available as a supplement to this report by request.

Advertised Location

Johns who respond to Backpage ads can expect to meet the advertised woman at a hotel or motel in the vicinity of the advertised region. Nearly all posts advertise a vague location under this field, such as Cleveland or nearby suburbs. All posts outside of these two locations met our exclusion criteria and therefore have been dismissed unless found to be a reasonable distance for a john to travel if he is determined enough to find sex for sale in the Cleveland area.

The reason this field is important is because it shows what areas are targeted by suppliers of sex workers most frequently. Many advertisements found in our data simply listed Cleveland as the area for which commercial sex was being sold. When specific areas, suburbs or locations were designated, there were several characteristics in common.

Highway Commerce and Commercial Sex

There is a direct link between commercial sex, human trafficking and the ease of transporting the victims. Northeast Ohio is divided by 6 major interstates: I-480, I-80, I-77, I-71, I-271 & I-90. We found postings listing locations off of each major highway.

Once the john has arrived, he must have enough disposable income to purchase the individual and sometimes also must pay the cost of a hotel or motel room. Although human trafficking and commercial sex are thought of as inner-city activities, many Backpage postings in our data target the more affluent suburbs of northeast Ohio.



The areas listed have a connection with business and industry in and around Cleveland. Advertisements sometimes mentioned the business traveler specifically. Titles such as “businessman’s lunch special” clearly market to a professional customer, the kind of person who has disposable income to use on commercial sex.

However, the recorded data reveals that almost every community within northeast Ohio was specifically targeted. While this area distribution is disturbing, there are several areas with inordinate numbers of commercial sex advertisements.

The following areas represent a high volume of commercial sex ads and as a result foster a high likelihood of human trafficking:

Cleveland Hopkins International

The vicinity surrounding Cleveland Hopkins airport was targeted by commercials ex ads 568 times. Airport hotel/motels are nationally synonymous with commercial sex and human trafficking. Cleveland Hopkins airport is located on interstate I-71 and I-480 and just minutes away from I-90. There are numerous hotels/motels directly off of the interstate with shuttle services to usher the traveler directly to his or her lodging. The scenario that plays out in so many airports nationwide is the traveling business professional takes an overnight layover in a city and purchases commercial sex. For the traveler, this is safer than purchasing sex at home as he or she is less likely to be identified or connected with the crime.

Independence

During the assessment window, 274 advertisements were posted soliciting commercial sex in Independence, Ohio. Independence is a centrally-located, affluent suburb with a large migratory business population. A traveler may use the crossroads of I-480 and I-77 for meetings, lodging and to engage in commercial sex. The large concentration of hotel and motels, access to the interstate system, and the migratory business population makes Independence accessible for traffickers to move victims in and out of the area without detection.

Beachwood

There were 249 advertisements recorded for commercial sex in Beachwood, Ohio. Beachwood is an affluent suburb located off of I-90, I-271 and I-480; there are large clusters of hotels and motels near the interstates and a large migratory business population.

Mentor, Euclid, and Willoughby Region

Our data collection followed advertisements for commercial sex into the far eastern suburbs along I-271 and I-90. The far eastern suburbs don't have the affluence or business links of the more centralized suburbs but do have a large concentration of hotels and motels along the highway off-ramps with large concentrations of business day-travelers passing through. 203 ads targeted Mentor for commercial sex and 308 targeted Willoughby. Euclid represented 158 ads.

Advertised Age

Advertised age is the second field, aside from advertised location, that will be seen most readily by the johns while browsing adult ads. This field is particularly deceptive because some posters may claim to be younger than they are while others claim to be older. The latter is particularly a problem when a girl is a minor and the ad claims that she is 18, the youngest possible age for consensual sex with an adult in Ohio. This is no secret to johns, and the sex-purchasing community is vigilant to look for phrases like "barely legal" or "just turned 18." Often, these phrases are indicators that the victim is a minor. Some traffickers are clever enough to disguise the age of their victim and advertise her as older than she actually may be. While using this strategy may be more difficult for johns to find younger girls, it may result in fewer frustrations or encounters with law enforcement for the trafficker.

During the three months that the assessment took place, the average age of an advertised person on backpage in Cleveland was 25.2 years old. Consider the following table:

Month	Average Age	Median Age
May	25.5	22
June	24.8	23
July	25.2	23
Final Average	25.2	24

The average age is going to be skewed slightly higher because of outliers that were factored into the total. Some ads listed prostitutes in their forties and sometimes even older.

The danger lurking behind the listed age is the reality of forced prostitution of minors. Our data does not yield specific occurrences of forced prostitution and we are not prepared to extrapolate from the history of confirmed cases previously mentioned. Instead, we can reveal how Backpage’s insistence on poor regulation, or nearly total lack thereof, allows an industry couched in deceit to flourish in Cleveland. Some women look older than they actually are while others are much older and record a younger age to attract clients. Despite the average age being around 25, victims younger than 18 are not uncommon to Backpage. This lack of regulation effectively means that a purchaser of prostitution may not be aware he or she is purchasing a child for commercial sex.



The average advertised age of girls listed on Backpage is almost 25.

The actual average age is likely much younger.

Name of Poster

Poster ID exists primarily as an identification field that we used to sort (along with phone number) to distinguish total unique posts. The names provided in this field are aliases, names that have been chosen by the girl or the pimp to be used when advertising online. Aliases ranged from traditional female names, such as Sarah or Candace, all the way to names like Lady Luck or Desire. This information is important for two reasons: 1) these are the names by which the girls are identified by purchasers of sex as well as other sellers, and 2) the names provide identifiers for law enforcement when conducting a sting.

Post ID Fields

Backpage assigns each ad a unique six-digit number that is used to identify the ad. During the course of the three month assessment window, 5,871 ads were posted advertising sex for sale to the Cleveland area, an average of just over 63 a day. Some of these ads were repeat postings by the same person, and some women only posted once during the three months. Total posts represent the gross number of posts and unique post ID represents the quantity of those posts which do not contain duplicates. Some ads calculated in the gross amount matched overlapping post IDs and were not accounted for in the unique post ID field. Unique post ID totaled at 2,708 ads posted during the three months.

The following chart breaks down the amount of posts per month during the study window. It is possible that these numbers reflect the volume of posts during the rest of the year, but additional factors may result in fluctuations of total posts. For example, street prostitution may increase during the summer months because the cold Ohio winters drive more ads to the internet.

Month	Gross Posts	Unique Post ID
May	1940	1025
June	2050	1173
July	1881	1089
Total	5871	2708

These two fields, Gross Posts and Unique Post ID, were analyzed in conjunction with the unique phone number field and, to a lesser extent, the name of the poster. We found that 800 total unique posts were recorded, meaning that roughly 800 women solicited commercial sex in Cleveland during the three-month assessment window.³ Approximately 267 women a month are involved in the online commercial sex industry in the target area. This amount, the supply, is indicative of a much larger demand for commercial sex. For every woman that has entered the market, there will be multiple purchasers that are driving the supply. Without the demand, the supply of trafficking victims would not exist.

Suspected Minor?

Escort ads usually contain pictures of the person being advertised. These images are often vulgar in nature and taken in hotel or motel rooms, places where traffickers can control their victims and sell them. When recording the data from Backpage, each of the researchers monitored closely for indicators that the advertised person could be a minor. If it appeared that a person was underage or held against their will, police were notified and shown the ad. Ongoing vigilance like that demonstrated by the Imagine Foundation research team resulted in the freedom of Jhon's victim. Thanks to the research team, the victim was properly identified and law enforcement alerted.

Conducting a study on Backpage in your own region may reveal that children are being sold online with little or no consequences from local law enforcement. Monitoring Backpage for children who are being sold is a helpful activity for NGOs because it allows them to cooperate directly with law enforcement by providing additional eyes for them and engages the NGO directly with anti-trafficking without putting the advocates in danger.

Cost Per Hour

Each Backpage ad also will often include an advertisement of cost per hour for the “escort.” Not every ad contained this information. Some, however, contained pricing for an “in-call” and an “out-call,” amounts that usually varied by ~20-25%. In-call pricing is the amount that sex costs if the john is willing to travel to the location the poster designates, and out-call pricing is the amount that must be paid if the john requests traveling elsewhere. The price discrepancy between incall and outcall exists as an extra measure of protection for the solicitor of commercial sex because the solicitor would often rather not travel to an unknown and potentially dangerous destination to meet the purchaser. At times only incall pricing was available for some ads. This is sometimes an indicator of coercion, control, or forced isolation if the seller of commercial sex is forbidden to leave the incall location. Consider the following chart:

³ We estimate this amount to be accurate up to 98 percent. Post names cannot always be verified as the same person although the posted names may be the same. Fortunately, the reliability of the remaining identifier fields diminished any accuracy concerns beyond 1 to 2 percent.

Month	Average In-Call	Median In-Call	Average Out-Call	Median Out-Call
May	\$147.00	\$150.00	\$173.00	\$180.00
June	\$147.00	\$150.00	\$178.00	\$200.00
July	\$143.00	\$140.00	\$178.00	\$180.00
Final Average	\$145.00	\$150.00	\$176.00	\$180.00

The average cost of sex that is purchased through Backpage in Cleveland is \$145 if in-call and \$176 if out-call. A trafficker will not be able to request more than what the rest of the market has set as the average price⁴, so if a trafficked victim is purchased and made to have sex and the john travels to the advertised location, the trafficker will net an average of \$145 each time the victim is forced to have sex. Continual purchasing of one victim results in extraordinary profits to the trafficker, who has to only pay costs for travel, food, and lodging. For a deeper analysis of these costs, see the appendix.

Phone Number

The phone number field is a particularly useful piece of information because it gives a strong indication of the origin city of the person soliciting sex, or the origin city of the pimp or trafficker. This information can be used to increase cooperation between law enforcement and NGOs in the states that most frequently appear on Backpage. Additionally, understanding the origin city of trafficking victims in respect to the destination cities will allow maps to be created that reveal likely travel routes that traffickers use to move people and increased pressure can be placed on interstates and highways that are most traveled.

To contact the poster of the ad, most ads include a phone number. During the rapid assessment, 925 unique phone numbers were recorded from the total 5,871 posts. Some ads contained multiple phone numbers, especially if an escort agency was advertising, and some represented other nearby cities. Of these phone numbers:

135 area codes were recorded. Area codes representing regions from all over the United States appeared, from Florida to California to New York.

3047 ads used the 216 area code, or the Cleveland area.

57% of the total posted area codes originated from the 216 area.

76% of the area codes represented Ohio area codes and the remaining 24% were dispersed throughout 38 states.⁵

Data gathered from phone numbers is not determinative of origin of the poster, but it is strongly indicative. Origin area codes outside of Ohio that appear frequently reveal that

4 This is based on the assumptions that the supply of commercial sex on Backpage conforms to the demand for it in the given region and that equilibrium has been reached. This assumption will not apply to all commercial sex, such as high priced call-girls or, conversely, commercial sex that is very inexpensive. Neither is addressed in this report; only commercial sex advertised on Backpage withstands our economic analysis.

5 See the appendix for the itemization of all 37 states by frequency of posts.

commercial sex is moving across state lines into Cleveland. There are 135 area codes represented by the collected data, a fact which further confirms that backpage is being used as a conduit for commercial sex moving across state lines.

Top Ten Origin States

The majority of the phone numbers listed during the assessment represent Cleveland and Ohio area codes. Moving people for sale through Ohio is internal trafficking, but once the traffickers move a person across state lines and into another state to be sold, the crime is now interstate trafficking, a federal crime. So where are the traffickers coming from? Our answers are not surprising. Aside from Ohio (which is the most frequent), the top ten states by frequency of area code appearing in adult ads are:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. Florida | 6. Georgia |
| 2. California | 7. Pennsylvania |
| 3. New York | 8. Michigan |
| 4. Nevada | 9. New Jersey |
| 5. Texas | 10. Maryland |

Trade will diminish with distance and geographical barriers unless the cost of transporting a victim is only a marginal percentage in the cost-to-profit ratio. If traffickers see an opportunity to move victims to a region with less pressure from law enforcement or into a state with weaker penalties, it is in their best interest to bring victims to new states. Additional factors that may explain this trade relationship include the sophistication of a criminal network. When trafficking networks become more sophisticated they can move people more fluidly across larger distances.

It is also not uncommon to see that victims are being moved in rings between different cities, thereby allowing the traffickers to keep the victims in isolation and unable to build any social structure which may be used for an escape. For example, four out of the five top origin states in the Northeast Ohio Backpage study match four out of the five top origin states in the Memphis Backpage study (Operation Broken Silence, 2010). Florida, California, Nevada and Texas are included in the top origin states in both studies. Each state contains vulnerable populations, usually immigrants, which are at risk for trafficking and have a history of struggling with trafficking. It is not a surprise to see the movement of commercial sex from these states into Cleveland and Memphis despite considerable distance between the states.

Profits to traffickers are great enough that if their victim is purchased more frequently in a less saturated market, like Ohio in comparison to California, then it is in the best financial interest of the pimp to traffic the victim across the United States. The burden to move the victim is lessened as the trafficker and victim can travel because the victim can be sold at truck stops and rest stations while being transported to the destination city. Consistent movement of victims, soliciting them online, and re-trafficking to other states allow traffickers advantages over law enforcement by enabling them to generate revenue while abandoning the traditional operation of a brothel, a far riskier enterprise.

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Escort Agencies

Entrepreneurs will always take notice of demand, wherever it arises, and will provide supply even if the trade is illegal. As demand remains consistent and business increases, suppliers will become more sophisticated and begin to organize structure and hierarchy. This phenomenon is not an exception in the sex trafficking industry. An escort agency is a business or network that sells prostitution from a selection of girls; all who “work” for a pimp, and this is exactly how escort agencies begin.

Generally, escort agencies do not allow a john to contact the girls directly and instead have “staff” that respond to the john’s phone calls and allow the john to select from the girls available from the agency. Once the john has made his selection, the girl will be dispatched or driven to the location specified by either the john or the agency, and the john then purchases a “date” with the girl. Escort agencies will adamantly deny that their girls are prostitutes and instead advocate that the girls go on the dates because they choose to do so and any sexual activity is “between two consensual adults.” As a result, the escort agency passes through a legal loophole and is able to sell prostitution cloaked as dates.

Escort agencies are alive in Cleveland. A brief Google search will reveal that perhaps a dozen escort agencies have been created and listed online, only to shut down and change numbers after a few months. Escort agencies represent a small portion of the total posts during the rapid assessment window. Some ads advertised two, three, or four girls. One ad offered as many as eleven girls at “The Chocolate Factory.” It is often difficult to tell when an ad represents an escort agency or is just trying to sell two or three girls. The same problem remains: sexual exploitation of multiple women can be disguised as a legal agency.

Audit Field and Data Quality

Our team used a system of checks and balances, where individuals would post the data corresponding to their day and then another individual reviewed the recorded data and checked for errors. This system provided consistency across the three months of data harvesting and resulted in accuracy that would have been compromised without an auditor.

The assessment during summer of 2011 represents only a fraction of the total amount of online prostitution for the year. We have chosen not to extrapolate this data and create estimates for the rest of 2011 because there is no baseline from which to compare previous fluctuations in not only the demographic but also the volume of posts. For instance, there may be more posts during the winter because it is too cold to be out on the strolls, and conversely less posts during the summer because street traffic will increase because the weather is warmer. Seasonal changes in post volume are a factor that must be considered when evaluating an entire year, therefore we dismissed extrapolation. However, we do not anticipate a drastic change in the amount of online prostitution will happen in the future unless demand either increases or decreases.

The Economics of Sex Trafficking and Illicit Markets

Prostitution exists because there is a demand for it. If johns were not buying commercial sex, there would be no reason for a supply of it to exist. Because this demand does exist, however, individuals will be voluntarily or forcefully sold for commercial sex. Basic economic principles apply to sex trafficking and the online commercial sex industry in many of the same ways that they apply to a legitimate business. The market for people will reach equilibrium between supply and demand because pimps and traffickers will find ways to move victims across state borders, national borders, various hotels and motels, etc., in order to meet demand in a given region.

Human trafficking is a business for the trafficker and the pimp. A trafficker is a skilled manipulator because he or she is able to easily identify the vulnerable, exploit those vulnerabilities, and eventually coerce them into the sex industry. The crime of sex trafficking is an economic crime in the eyes of the trafficker. If any illicit trade, including human trafficking, is analyzed as a business for traffickers, pimps, and brothel owners, weaknesses in the market can be exposed and undermined in order to cripple the trade (Kara, 2009).

Supply of Victims

Traffickers will continue to supply victims into their target region so long as they are making money in that region. Economic principles demonstrate that any given commodity will flow into a region until the market is saturated and the balance between supply and demand reaches equilibrium. The Cleveland sex market is a mixture of willing independent prostitutes and victims of sex trafficking that are the commodities being sold.

If a girl is arrested, it is cheaper for a pimp just to replace her, rather than bail her out.



When another region becomes more profitable, the local market becomes over-supplied, or the risk of trafficking becomes too great, the trafficker will move the victim to a new region. Traffickers also will move victims between cities in cycles so that the victim is introduced as a novel commodity to johns and so the victim cannot form a support structure that could possibly be used for escape. Should a girl be arrested, it is cheaper for a pimp to replace her rather than bail her out. So long as the pimp is still making money off the girls he is selling, he is not concerned with the arrest of one victim. A successful negotiation with a trafficker can have fresh victims supplied to the pimp within hours. Our research in Cleveland exists to highlight the extent of this supply of women for the purpose of commercial sex. For every victim supplied, however, there are multiple buyers of sex. The aggregate consumption of commercial sex by johns creates the demand.

Demand and Commercial Sex

Demand for commercial sex is the engine behind the trade. So long as purchasers continue to seek out commercial sex, whether online or out on the streets, traffickers will continue to deliver to the demand. A sex slave is more profitable to the trafficker than a willing prostitute because the trafficker can maximize profits if the he or she does not have to pay any percentage of the victim's

earnings back to them. In this way, the trafficker can take advantage of the john's desperation for sex and capitalize on the rape of the person being trafficked. This demand drives the market for commercial sex. When johns stop purchasing, traffickers stop trafficking.

Collateral Effects on Society

How much does human trafficking affect the average citizen? What does it mean for the citizens of Cleveland and Ohio? Must we approach sex trafficking with urgency? Some may argue that trafficking is a problem, but not a priority compared to the gun or drug trade.

We disagree. Trafficking of people, while reprehensible itself, usually includes other forms of illicit trade as well. Any of the five major black markets (drugs, people, guns, counterfeit money, and intellectual property) usually is not found without at least one of the others (Naim, 2006). For instance, if coyotes (a name for smugglers at the Mexico border) become very successful at smuggling/trafficking people across a border, they often realize that guns or drugs can easily be brought along the same routes that have been successful already. A trafficker makes the same decision that successful people in legitimate businesses do: they diversify their portfolios. If a trafficking ring is already making profits in one aspect of illegal trade and there is a market for one of the other trades in the same region, it is in the best interest of the traffickers to include weapons or drugs as well. Each of the five major black markets are seldom found alone.



If a community takes a less than aggressive stance against human trafficking, or neglects trafficking to fight the drug or gun trade alone, there is a critical piece of the puzzle missing. As a society, we have decided to outlaw and punish traffickers of drugs and weapons because we know that when guns and drugs reach their destination and are used they will hurt people. Does it not make more sense to more aggressively pursue and punish a trade that is directly hurting people and in the process apprehend the same people who are also trafficking guns and weapons?

Labor

Another effect of human trafficking that is not immediately obvious is the decrease of the legitimate labor pool that a state will experience if trafficking is allowed to become more organized. Each additional person that enters the market as a trafficker is one less person that is benefiting society in a job that can be taxed, regulated, and used to improve the community, even if it is low paying or unskilled labor. One common argument against this principle is that a community's labor will not be hurt by a few traffickers if compared to the society at large because of the disparity between number of traffickers and the size of the community. This argument underestimates the scope of an illicit trade like human trafficking; instead we should consider pimps, brothel owners, the victims themselves, madams, runners, and any other possible worker that chooses to make money from forced prostitution instead of a legitimate job.

Once considered in its totality, it is possible to see how much of a burden on society a black

market can be. Each new actor who enters a black market will diminish social utility. For example, consider two states, Home and Foreign. If Home accepts an influx of trafficked girls from Foreign, then the size of the legitimate labor pool diminishes. Now, Home must support both the victims and the traffickers, none of which are producing any good or service that is useful to society. The women, even if freed, unless they are rehabilitated or provided with a job that could somehow economically promote Home, are an economic burden on the nation and thus decrease overall social welfare. Lastly, legitimate businesses are harmed because capital is accumulating in unregulated and illegal markets, a problem that legal reform can solve and is addressed later in the report.

HIV and Community Health

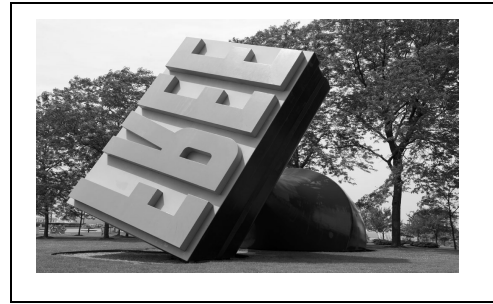
It may seem a bit harsh to call victims of human trafficking an economic burden. We do not intend to say that victims are a burden to society because they are not producing. Instead, we aspire to consider the whole community as well as the victims' plight when examining the effects of illicit trade. Increase of HIV as a result of trafficking is a second example of a problem that not only damages the victim but also the greater community.

If trafficking and prostitution are able to flourish within any given region, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases may also increase. Not enough research has been done on the correlation between human trafficking and HIV. Studies in Asia show that although undertaking a study on HIV in conjunction with trafficking is difficult, some results can be established and policy implemented (United Nations, 2007).

This is an area where the medical, academic, and NGO communities have an opportunity to cooperate in an interdisciplinary study on the Ohio and Cleveland problem of human trafficking and its linkage to sexually transmitted disease. Admittedly, finding information or hard numbers on an illicit trade is difficult in itself, much less later on when attempting to identify infection rates and prevalence of disease in a specific community. This, however, does not mean that the undertaking is not worthwhile. If low-income and immigrant medical clinics can know how to approach local health problems in a more efficient or strategic manner, or health care providers have a better understanding of the origin of the spread of HIV, the victim and the community will both benefit.

How to Fight Back

Human trafficking and slavery exist in northeast Ohio. Although trafficking is hidden from view, it still affects our city, culture, and the lives of the children of Cleveland in ways we may not immediately see. Our responsibilities as citizens of Cleveland and Ohio include protecting trafficking victims in the best capacity we are able.



The following recommendations are specific ways in which human trafficking can be abolished from not only Cleveland but the world as well. Some recommendations are specific examples tailored to professionals or industries, while others can be generally applied by anyone who wants to join in the fight against human trafficking.

We recommend:

- Backpage, owned by Village Voice Media, immediately cease advertisement of “Adult Services,” thereby eliminating the possibility of its use to advertise trafficked victims.
- Cleveland Scene Magazine, owned by Village Voice Media, immediately end its advertising of “escorts,” thereby eliminating the possibility of advertising trafficked victims.
- Northeast Ohio establish a dedicated care facility for trafficked survivors either through the public or private non-profit sector.
- High schools and universities in Ohio include units on modern slavery and human trafficking within applicable curriculum.
- Hotels and motels voluntarily train their staff on spotting and reporting trafficked victims.
- Service industries such as bars and restaurants train their workers on spotting and reporting trafficked victims.
- City of Cleveland requires the owners and operators of the proposed casino to be trained in anti-trafficking measures.
- High school and university counselors be trained in spotting warning signs surrounding trafficked victims.
- Health care workers be trained in spotting the warning signs surrounding trafficked victims.

The Cleveland Backpage Report is a light that is being shined on the darkness surrounding human trafficking in Ohio. Now that this information has illuminated the hearts and minds of the readers, it must be a catalyst for change. Even if Backpage immediately takes down its adult services, human trafficking will still operate within Ohio. Sex trafficking is a multi-faceted crime that requires an equally multi-faceted solution and needs involvement from the individual, faith groups, academics, healthcare providers, businesses, law enforcement, and even the survivors themselves. Consider where you can do your part in modern abolition with the following options.

For the individual:

- If you suspect someone is being trafficked or commercially exploited, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-373-7888.
- Do not purchase commercial sex. While some johns argue they know which prostitutes are willing and which are not, this is truly impossible.
- Revise your vocabulary to eliminate the word “pimp” as a positive descriptor.
- Volunteer with a local abolition organization.
- When traveling domestically or abroad, support travel organizations that have signed the Code of Conduct concerning human trafficking.

Churches, Temples, Synagogues, or social organizations:

- Within your scripture study and discuss writings on slavery.
- Host a letter writing campaign to end human trafficking within your community.
- Host a night walk and hand out literature on human trafficking.
- Hold a peaceful protest or boycott against businesses that support or profit from commercial exploitation.
- Host a “Boycott” by supporting or purchasing from a business that is actively trying to end human trafficking.
- Invite in abolitionists or human rights advocates to talk to your group.
- Post and make available literature regarding human trafficking.
- Financially support an abolitionist or organization fighting modern slavery and trafficking.

Academics, Schools, and Universities:

- Within applicable lessons, teach students about modern slavery and human trafficking, in addition to historical aspects.
- Within business schools, discuss the economic impact of illicit trade on society, including human trafficking and slavery.
- Include discussions regarding prostitution and human trafficking within sexual education.
- Provide and display human trafficking literature in applicable areas of a school.
- Support service trips both domestically and internationally that educate students to the reality of underserved populations that are vulnerable to human trafficking.

Healthcare Providers

- Host training workshops for nurses, doctors and aid workers on identifying, aiding and reporting trafficked victims.
- Make health care services available free of charge for trafficking survivors, or partner with a local nonprofit to mitigate health care costs.

Businesses

- Take the initiative, explore your supply lines and certify your products as slave-free.
- Publish and make readily available a social responsibility statement that clearly addresses company policies on forced labor or exploitation.
- Regularly inspect your supply lines to make sure it is slave-free.

- Only manufacture in countries actively combating commercial exploitation in supply chains.

Law Enforcement

- Keep current training on all current laws on human trafficking.
- Train communities and groups on human trafficking and how to report it.
- Form professional relationships with abolition organizations within your community.
- Know local services available to trafficked survivors.
- Don't arrest the victims; seek help for them.

Trafficking Survivors

- Live every day to the fullest and strive to live a joyful life; your success will pioneer the way for future survivors.
- When and if you're ready to talk, please do. Your story brings a personal and tangible element to abolition. You can teach us and help to prevent others from being hurt as you have.

Future Research Topics:

- Legal policy studies regarding human trafficking.
- Feasibility of long and short term care facilities for trafficking survivors.
- The effect of casinos on the commercial sex industry of northeast Ohio.
- How to integrate anti-trafficking education into the Ohio education system.

Legal Toolbox and Policy Recommendations

Legal reform began in 2000 with the TVPA. Since its subsequent reauthorizations, states have joined the anti-trafficking rally by implementing legal reform, which punishes traffickers and johns while also protecting victims. Federal statutes provide heavy sentences for the traffickers and serve as an excellent model for state penalties. The final section of this report is a legal toolbox for lawyers and advocates that are taking a stand for victims through legal reform and prosecution or assistance.

Ohio Anti-Trafficking Law and Polaris Ranking

Ohio has taken two significant steps to combat human trafficking. On December 29, 2010 Ohio Governor Ted Strickland signed into law S.B. 235 to officially criminalize human trafficking as a state offense. With the passage of bill S.B. 235, human trafficking in Ohio is now a second-degree felony. The following ranking by the Polaris Project details additional legal developments that have been realized since the passage of the inaugural S.B. 235 and the TVPA.

The Polaris Project publishes an annual ranking of each state on a ten point system as a measurement of how each state is progressing toward stronger laws that punish traffickers, provide assistance for victims, and empower law enforcement and the non-profit community in those regions. The ranking is based on the following ten laws recommended by Polaris as the critical legislation every state ought to have:

Law	Ohio Status
(1) Sex Trafficking Statute	Yes
(2) Labor Trafficking Statute	Yes
(3) Asset Forfeiture	No
(3b) Investigative Tools	No
(4) Training for Law Enforcement	No
(4b) Human Trafficking Task Force	No
(5) Posting of the National Hotline	Yes
(6) Safe Harbor (Protects Sex Trafficked Minors)	Yes
(7) Lower Burden of Proof for Sex Trafficking of Minors	No
(8) Victim Assistance	No
(9) Access to Civil Damages	No
(10) Vacating Convictions for Sex Trafficking Victims	No
Ranking	4 out of 10

The twelve categories listed in the chart make up all or parts of the ten laws suggested by Polaris. For instance, the Human Trafficking Task Force law is one of the recommended Law Enforcement Training laws and, similarly, the Investigative Tools law is a subsection of Asset Forfeiture. The Ohio ranking, a four out of ten, places the state among the lower half of the total

states ranked by the Polaris Project. Future improvements in state law should satisfy these ten laws that are the basic legislation necessary to combat the crime in any state. This list is not a comprehensive list of all possible laws that can be used to combat human trafficking in Ohio, but only a beginning.

Potential Causes of Action

While sex trafficking is recognized as a criminal activity, victims of trafficking also have potential civil remedies available to impose against their traffickers. In Ohio, the most direct cause of action for human trafficking is under the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 (“TVRPA”). This cause of action allows anyone who is a victim of a violation of the federal human trafficking offense to bring a civil action against a perpetrator. In addition, under this federal statute it is also possible to bring an action against any person or entity that has engaged in a venture in which he or she knew or should have known a human trafficking violation was taking place; and knowingly benefitted financially from the activity. Victims are afforded this cause of action even in the absence of a criminal prosecution or a federal investigation of the trafficking activity (Werner & Kim, 2008).

A successful litigation of such a claim will require that all the elements of the federal crime of human trafficking are met. Because of this, a criminal prosecution and particularly a conviction are most beneficial because the government will have provided so much assistance toward the goal of proving these elements. In a criminal case, the elements must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. At the civil level, however, the burden of proof is less onerous, requiring only a preponderance of the evidence. Because of this, it is likely that a successful litigation for damages against a trafficker can still go forward even if the trafficker is not even being investigated. Successful cases against entities that have benefitted financially from ventures where they should have known trafficking was taking place are a little trickier. There has not been enough research done on the success rates of these cases. The most recent cases brought on this issue, however, may offer promising results.

Another potential cause of action is implied under the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. It states simply that neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude shall exist within the United States or any place subject to its jurisdiction (U.S. Const. amend. XIII, sec. 1). Because human sex trafficking consists of persons being compelled to participate in commercial sexual activity against their will, it follows naturally that it should be prohibited by the Thirteenth Amendment. Unfortunately, it is not that simple, even if it should be. Although there are criminal penalties imposed due to the enactment of the Thirteen Amendment, there is no recognized *private* cause of action, meaning a court action by one private person or organization against another without the involvement of the government recognized by the highest levels of authority in the United States. Manliguez v. Joseph, 226 F.Supp 377, 383. Lower level courts differ on whether the Thirteenth Amendment was meant to allow a private cause of action and the Supreme Court has not definitively held as to whether the 13th Amendment gives rise to a private cause of action. In Ohio and its federal jurisdiction, the question has never been raised (Werner & Kim, 2008). Nevertheless, to the extent that it is attempted, a plaintiff must be able to demonstrate that the defendant’s actions constituted “involuntary servitude.”

Other potential civil causes of action may include basic state claims of intentional acts of false imprisonment, assault, battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress. The circumstances involved in each individual victim’s case will dictate whether these causes of action can be pursued. It might also be possible to bring other claims such as a civil claim under the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO). Sex trafficking victims unfortunately cannot

bring a cause of action under employment laws, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act, because commercial sex trade is not recognized as a legitimate means of employment. This does not mean, however, that victims will not be amply compensated with the causes of action that *are* available to them.

Federal Prosecution

Where sex trafficking of minors involves actual transportation across state lines, separate charges may be brought under 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a), without running afoul of the double jeopardy clause. (*United States v. Brooks*, 2010). Given that knowledge of the victim's age is not required under Section 2423(a), this may be a valuable prosecution tool where transportation did, in fact, occur, particularly in conduct predating the 2008 revisions to the TVPA which lowered the knowledge requirement concerning a victim's age. (*United States v. Daniels*, 2011). Since 2003, 18 U.S.C. § 1591 has been listed as a predicate offense for the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act. (RICO, 18 U.S.C. § 1961). RICO provides a powerful tool against sex trafficking, allowing for harsher penalties, broader conspiracy provisions, and the ability to include charges where the statute of limitations may have passed. A trafficker may be charged with RICO as well as conspiracy to violate RICO, together with the predicate offense, yielding a potential sentence upwards of forty years (Smith, 2011). RICO presents prosecutors with the ability to seize and forfeit assets gained as part of the criminal enterprise. (RICO, 18 U.S.C. § 1963(a)). RICO also provides trafficking victims with the ability to file civil suits for financial restitution in addition to the mandatory restitution requirement provided by 18 U.S.C. § 1593(a).

With respect to sentencing, there are various options available to prosecutors under Chapter Two, Section G of the United States Sentencing Guidelines. As a starting point, when convicted under 18 U.S.C. § 1591(b)(1), the base offense level is 34, yielding a minimum starting point of 12 years and 7 months imprisonment. When convicted under 18 U.S.C. § 1591(b)(2), and the offense involves a minor, the base offense level is 30, yielding a minimum starting point of 8 years and 1 month imprisonment. Upward departures are available where bodily injury occurred as part of the offense, or if the offense involved ten or more victims. There are enhancements available when the offense of conviction involves fraud or coercion, in cases involving multiple victims, the Sentencing Guidelines provide for increased offense levels because each victim is treated as if contained in a separate count of conviction where there was undue influence of a minor or misrepresentation of a participant's identity, where there is actual sexual contact or a commercial sex act with a minor, and in instances where the offense involved a minor under the age of 12. (U.S.S.G. § 2G1.1(a)(1); U.S.S.G. § 2G1.3(a)(1)).

Restitution

Whatever method a victim may consider for a civil cause of action, it will likely be very hard on the victim to recount the abuse that he or she went through to multiple attorneys, dispositions (where the perpetrator has the right to be present), and potentially to a jury and a judge as well. Those victims whose traffickers have a pending criminal action may be satisfied with seeking criminal restitution. Restitution is money required as part of a criminal sentence to be paid to a victim by the defendant. In federal criminal trafficking cases under the TVPA, full restitution is required. The victim will have some work to do in making the appropriate calculation, which unfortunately cannot include a claim for lost wages. Victim advocates and/or the victim's counsel, if any, may be able to assist in making the calculation. The difficulty with restitution is that only the prosecutor can ask for it, and thus only the prosecutor can seek sanctions if it is not paid. This takes the control of the claim out of the hands of the victim. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile for a victim to

seek restitution in the criminal case, because doing so will not stop a victim from pursuing a civil remedy. Any calculations that have been done for criminal restitution will help a victim prepare for a potential civil action.

Other Matters to Consider

A victim seeking to pursue a civil remedy would benefit from discussing with counsel which causes of action would be most appropriate, whether to file a cause of action in federal or state court, what the interplay would be between a civil and a criminal case (if one exists), and several other factors that go into civil litigation. The statute of limitations is one of the most important factors in pursuing a civil claim. Under the TVPRA, the statute of limitations is ten years, though it may be more limited for other potential causes of action.

Closing Remarks

Abolishing slavery is a process that will require cooperation from many kinds of people with varying skills, talents, and passions, and is not limited to only a select few lawyers, medical personnel, law enforcement or social workers. When many people consider combating the modern slave trade, the first idea that may come to mind is that someone else, somewhere else, is working against it and so they don't need to join. One of the most important truths underlying modern abolition is that *anyone can be an abolitionist*.

Professionals, students, at-home moms, anyone can take part in or lead freedom campaigns. All that is required is a desire to help end slavery in Cleveland and Ohio, and the Imagine Foundation can help you use your own talents and abilities to bring fresh aspects to abolition. If you or your organization is interested in research like this in your own city, please contact Operation Broken Silence at info@operationbrokensilence.org.

We encourage the citizens of Cleveland and Ohio to continue aggressive anti-trafficking campaigns. Until traffickers are listening and feel pressure from law enforcement, harsh and just laws are in place, and survivors are set free, we must continue. Neglect and silence are two of the greatest allies of traffickers. Join our campaigns in 2012 and break the silence surrounding human trafficking.

Together we can create sustainable freedom for the oppressed and bring justice to the oppressors.

Glossary

All terms and definitions are provided by Google:Define and Wikipedia

Bonded Labor: A practice in which employers give high-interest loans to workers whose entire families then labor at low wages to pay off the debt; the practice is illegal in the United States.

Breaking In: The process by which the will of a victim to resist the conditions of human trafficking is broken, most often used in the context of continuous rape used to accustom a victim to sex trafficking.

Coyote: A person who smuggles Latin Americans across the US border, typically for a high fee.

Donation: The price agreed on as payment for services rendered in a commercial sex act.

Forced Labor: Work which one is compelled to perform against one's will, especially in a condition of involuntary servitude as a prisoner or slave.

Human Trafficking: A criminal activity in which people are recruited, harboured, transported, bought, or kidnapped to serve an exploitative purpose, such as sexual slavery, forced labor, or child soldiery.

Incall: A visit by a purchase of commercial sex to the location requested by the trafficker, prostitute, or victim.

John: A purchaser of commercial sex.

Outcall: A visit by an escort, prostitute, etc., to the address of the caller.

Pimp: An agent for prostitutes who lives off their earnings. Pimping is illegal in most countries. The majority of pimps are men. The female equivalent of a pimp is a madam.

Roses: Slang term to denote one unit of the local currency used to pay for commercial sex, usually referencing U.S. dollars.

Slave: A person forced to obey another without pay or any compensation and against the will of the person. Usually slaves are either exploited sexually, for labor, or as a child soldier.

Stockholm Syndrome: Feelings of trust or affection felt in many cases of kidnapping or hostage-taking by a victim toward a captor.

Stable: A slang term used by pimps and traffickers in reference to their roster of prostitutes working for them.

Stroll: The usual route which a prostitute will walk.

Trafficked Victim: An individual who is forced through fraud or coercion into one of the forms of slavery. Any individual under the age of 18 who engages or is forced to engage in a commercial sex act, regardless of consent, is considered a trafficked victim by Federal law.

Trafficker: A clandestine transporter of goods or persons past a point where prohibited, such as out of a building, into a prison, or across an international border, in violation of applicable laws or other regulations.

Trafficking in Persons Office: The office in the U.S. State Department charged with monitoring and combating trafficking in persons.

Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP): An annual publication released by the Department of State that indexes countries by compliance to basic human rights standards pertaining to human trafficking and ranks them accordingly.

Trick: Slang for a commercial sex act.

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18 U.S.C. § 1595

18 U.S.C. § 1595(a) 18 U.S.C. § 1595(c)

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18 U.S.C. § 1963(a)\

18 U.S.C. § 1964(c)

U.S.S.G. § 2G1.1(a)(1)

U.S.S.G. § 2G1.3(a)(1)

U.S.S.G. § 2G1.3(a)(2)

U.S.S.G. § 2G1.1, App. Notes 2 and 6

U.S.S.G. § 2G1.1(b)(1)

U.S.S.G. § 2G1.1(d)(1)

U.S.S.G. § 2G1.3(b)(2)

U.S.S.G. § 2G1.3(b)(4)

U.S.S.G. § 2G1.3(b)(5)

Appendix

When traffickers sell a person, the transaction is always in cash, and because most of the traffickers' expenses are limited he or she will make a considerable profit. Only nominal purchases are required, such as motel or hotel room, clothing, condoms, etc. The following chart is a breakdown of apartment brothel economics from Queens, New York.⁶ Regional differences in price and inflation (originally published in 2006) must be considered.

General Assumptions:

8 Slaves per apartment brothel

Average 10 sex acts per day

1 of 5 customers buys 1 condom

50 percent "tip" per 20 sex acts

Unit Assumptions:			Monthly Profit and Loss	
Revenues	Unit Prices		Revenues	
Sale of Sex	\$30			\$72,000
Condoms	\$1			\$480
			Total Monthly Revenues	\$72,480
Variable Costs			Operating Expenses	
Food, beverage, and drug for slave	\$18	Per slave per day		\$4,320
Rent	\$70	Per day		\$2,100
Clothing, makeup, grooming	\$8	Per slave per day		\$1,920
Bouncer/guard (2)	\$120	Per day		\$7,200
Cost of condom	\$0.25	Per unit		\$120
Medical (includes abortions)	\$10	Per slave per day		\$240
"Tip"	\$15	Per slave per 20 sex acts		\$1,800
Marketing/Advertising	\$3	Per slave per day		\$720
Utilities and Miscellaneous	\$5	Per slave per day		\$1,200
			Total Operating Expenses	\$21,780
			Gross Profit	\$50,700
Average acquisition cost of slave			Gross Profit Margin (%)	70
			Depreciation	\$800
			Total Depreciation	\$800
			Net Profit	\$49,900
			Net Profit Margin (%)	68.8
			Annual Revenues	\$869,760
			Annual Net Profit	\$598,800
			Per slave	\$74,850

6 Kara, Siddharth. *Sex Trafficking*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. Kara now works for Free the Slaves and his book is one of the leading texts that explains sex-trafficking as a business and exploits its vulnerabilities. It must be noted that this chart was not produced by OBS nor the data therein. For a deeper analysis of the economics of trafficking globally we recommend reading Kara's book.

Total State Area Codes

The following list is a table of area codes that appeared in Cleveland ads that are indexed by state. Some states contain more than one area code, so these are a cumulative representation by state and not by each area code region. Each number corresponding to the state is the number of times the state appeared in any of the 5,871 ads. Thirty-seven out of fifty states, the District of Columbia (Washington D.C.), Canada and Toll free numbers were represented during the assessment window for a total of 39 distinct areas.

1. Ohio - 4,160	21. Oregon – 13
2. Florida - 527	22. Missouri - 12
3. California – 189	23. Virginia - 12
4. New York - 134	24. Indiana - 11
5. Nevada - 102	25. Colorado - 10
6. Texas -59	26. Minnesota - 8
7. Georgia - 47	27. North Carolina - 6
8. Pennsylvania - 43	28. Delaware - 6
9. Michigan - 38	29. Hawaii - 4
10. New Jersey - 36	30. Canada - 4
11. Maryland - 35	31. Arkansas - 2
12. Arizona - 26	32. Oklahoma - 2
13. Illinois - 24	33. Iowa - 2
14. Alabama -23	34. West Virginia - 2
15. Tennessee - 21	35. Connecticut - 2
16. New Hampshire - 21	36. Kentucky - 2
17. Washington, DC - 19	37. Wyoming - 2
18. Louisiana - 15	38. Maine - 1
19. Washington - 15	39. Mississippi - 1
20. Toll Free - 14	