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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Ensures Natl HT Hotline is Functioning



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is calling on Congressional leaders to ensure the National Human Trafficking Hotline is functioning as intended. Discoveries in recent months show that Polaris only forwards tips from the hotline in limited circumstances. Attorney General Moody is requesting Congress take action to restore the hotline's effectiveness and preserve the critical joint federal-state effort to end human trafficking.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “The mission of the National Human Trafficking Hotline is a valiant one: forward tips to authorities who may use the information to put an end to a trafficking victim’s suffering. Unfortunately, Polaris is failing to follow this important standard, yet continues to receive large amounts of federal funding. I’m urging Congressional leaders to get to the bottom of this, so our law enforcement authorities can be better equipped with the knowledge needed to stop this atrocious crime. Floridians who suspect human trafficking need to call 855-FLA-SAFE.”

Since 2007, the sole operator of the federally funded National Human Trafficking Hotline is Polaris. Many states rely on the national hotline to forward tips of suspected human trafficking to local law enforcement to arrest traffickers, safely recover victims and uncover evidence of trafficking rings and operations.

Discoveries in recent months show that Polaris only forwards tips to state law enforcement about adult victims in limited circumstances. This practice is contrary to what Polaris advertises, to what states and organizations have come to expect from this partnership, and, the attorneys general believe, to what Congress expects from its funding. Additionally, in some cases, states discovered a delay of several months before the hotline shared tips.

Many states, federal agencies and organizations actively engage the public in utilizing the hotline to gather additional intelligence on trafficking operations, disrupt these criminal activities and recover victims. The newly-discovered Polaris practices dramatically diminish the value of the hotline to any of these efforts.

In a letter to Congressional leaders, the attorneys general state: “We urge Congress to ensure that Polaris makes changes to its current and reported planned tip reporting policies to begin forwarding tips regarding suspected human trafficking of adults, in a prompt manner, to the corresponding state’s law enforcement officials for their evaluation and response to ensure victim safety… We cannot afford to lose the benefits of this federal-state partnership to end trafficking.”

Along with Attorney General Moody, attorneys general from the following states and territories signed the letter: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia and Wisconsin.

To read a copy of the letter, click here.

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