Analysis of Human Trafficking Cases in Rhode Island, 2009-2013 (Abstract, Peer Reviewed)

Donna M. Hughes, Dr., University of Rhode Island
Rachel Dunham, University of Rhode Island
Faith Skodmin, University of Rhode Island
Lucy Tillman, University of Rhode Island
Jessica Wainfor, University of Rhode Island
Abstract

Analysis of Human Trafficking Cases in Rhode Island, 2009-2013

Donna M. Hughes*, Rachel Dunham, Faith Skodmin, Lucy Tillman and Jessica Wainfor
Gender and Women’s Studies Program, University of Rhode Island

6th Annual Interdisciplinary Conference on Human Trafficking 2014
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, October 9-11, 2014

Present an analysis of seven state and federal cases of human trafficking, including forced labor and sex trafficking, in Rhode Island from 2009 until 2013. In 2009, Rhode Island passed a comprehensive human trafficking law. Since then there have been six cases of sex trafficking and one case of forced labor. Sources for information on the human trafficking cases were police reports, witness statements, court documents and media reports. This presentation will briefly summarize the cases and discuss the similarities and difference among the cases and discuss of some key findings from these cases, which include:

1) Victims were trafficked to Rhode Island because of an actual or perceived environment of tolerance of prostitution
2) Mothers of victims were involved in finding their daughters on online prostitution advertising sites sites and making police reports that initiated investigations
3) Victims were identified and reported to police by educated professionals and aware citizens
4) Victims of sex trafficking were often runaway or missing teens
5) Traffickers used online prostitution sites to advertise victims of sex trafficking
6) The credibility of a domestic worker victim of forced labor differed between judges
7) Sex buyers were not arrested in connection to any of the sex trafficking cases

*Contact person