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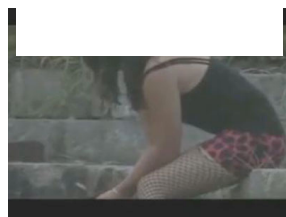
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Advocates: Human Trafficking Awareness Week Needed

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from YouTube Human Trafficking Awareness video

by Kim Gebbia

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - It's an unthinkable crime that happens every day in Tennessee: children and adults bought and sold in an underground sex trade. Human trafficking is now the second fastest growing crime in the country, and in just the past two years, thousands of cases were reported to law enforcement and the Department of Children's Services.

It's why Governor Bill Haslam declared November 6 through November 12 the first ever Human Trafficking Awareness Week. It starts with a disturbing Public Service Announcement that will air throughout the state. It shows images of teens and children being forced into the sex trade right here in America, in Tennessee and in Davidson County.

View the entire video here:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cbbcw-TkUy0>

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people to embrace it," said Yvonne Williams with the Trafficking in America Task Force.

She's hoping the video will get people's attention to recognize the problem and stop denying it.

In Tennessee in just the past 24 months, officials reported 4,000 cases of human trafficking. Those reports came from 78 of the state's 95 counties. Advocates for change say the majority is made of teenage girls. Many of them are the one-third of runaways who never return home.

"That one-third that doesn't go back home are victims of human sex trafficking and within 48 hours they are usually picked up by a pimp, bad guy, whoever, and forced into prostituting themselves within 48 hours," said Williams.

She said they are transported easily on the mid-state's four major interstates and pimped out at trucks stops, motels and even blatantly on web sites like backpage.com where men will post pictures of girls hoping to lure clients in for some quick cash.

But, the awareness campaign is hoping to bring a culture of change, first by acknowledging that a problem exists.

"I do think it's something we need to raise awareness of because the average citizen doesn't think it happens," said Governor Bill Haslam.

Across America, human trafficking is a \$32 billion industry.

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