How Colorado Is Leading the Way to End Human Trafficking

A 2017 community dialogue prompted the following Opinion Paper. Dr. Jalbert moderated the panel conversation. Intending to catalyze comprehension of the United Nations (UN) Global Goals (Sustainable Development Goals, aka SDGs), the multi-faceted program highlighted UN work globally, outlined the US role in the UN, spotlighted local impact and underscored House Bill 17-10401.
United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are also known as Global Goals. Based in Washington, DC, the keynote speaker Senior Director of Membership and Programs at UNA-USA-UN Foundation, Rachel Pittman opened.

Subsequent to the Millennium Development Goals, the SDGs were adopted by all UN 193 member nations in 2015. The 17 goals are an accountable, active to-do list for the world to achieve by 2030. Global goals aspire to end poverty, protect our fragile planet and ensure equitable prosperity.

“We all have an important role in achieving the Global Goals,” Pittman said. Individual action is critical for success because a strong UN is a STRONG USA! Advocate to Congress to fully fund the UN. It’s more vital now than ever before that we fulfill our ethical leadership obligations to the world.

Advocacy for equitable economic, political, and social parity is rooted in the SDGs. These Global Goals envision a world without poverty, a healthy planet, a vibrant, inclusive economy and a life of dignity for all.

Ms. Pittman noted that governments have less than 15 years to achieve it all. It’s our job, as concerned citizens, to contribute to the goals’ attainment. SDGs are possible if we fight for them.

What is the intersection of the SDGs and local action? The UNA-Denver panel explains the local/global connection.
How is Tackling Human Trafficking related to the SDGs set in 2015?

Panel Open

Where we go in life correlates strongly to trails blazed before us. To open the discussion, Dr. Jalbert evoked pathways trod resolutely by Ruth Purkable (now 103!), a UNA Denver founder, and Genevieve Fiore, UNESCO Denver founder. She valued the current UNA Denver board for upholding Ruth and Genevieve’s life works and ideals.

Attention then turned to the UN’s SDGs. Of the 17 goals, three specifically mention human trafficking: #5 – gender equality, #8 – decent work and economic growth, and #16 – peace, justice and strong institutions. The concentration of these three SDGs has given activists hope that addressing this grave human rights violation will be a greater priority for all UN member countries and citizens.

Panelists proceeded to draw local/global parallels. Opening dialogue centered on Colorado House Bill 17-1040. Since 2007, over 2,000 calls on human trafficking were made to the national hotline for Colorado. Beneath the natural beauty of Colorado is a trap of atrocious human rights violations. As modern-day slavery, often people refuse to acknowledge that it is indeed a local concern.

Colorado’s 38th Attorney General Cynthia Coffman explained the value of House Bill 17-1040. Four deeply engaged activists working to end human trafficking followed Coffman:

- Marianna Koscharovsky, Founder & Executive Director of ALIGHT
- Dr. AnnJanette Alejano-Steele, Co-Founder of The Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking
- Maria Trujillo, Coordinator of the CO Human Trafficking Council
- Peg Brantley, Author of TRAFFICKED
- Dr. Susanne E. Jalbert, Moderator and CEO of Jalbert Consulting.

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Human Trafficking

Marianna Kosharovsky, JD, as co-host of this UNA Denver event, set the stage with a concrete definition of human trafficking.

Human trafficking at its most basic level is about the severe exploitation of another person and a person’s vulnerability for profit. Traffickers play on weaknesses for private profit.

Traffickers knowingly sell, entice, transfer, or provide human beings as a means for profit. Entrapped persons, or coerced children, are involuntarily victims.

A major issue is sex trafficking, but the crime crosses all industries (agriculture, service, construction, household help and other areas).

Trafficking is driven by marginalization and vulnerability. Specific groups of people are not victims. Immigrants, ethnic minorities and impoverished persons are at risk.

Huge resource disparity exists amid traffickers and responders. The ILO estimates traffickers profit $150 billion per year. Traffickers are savvy technology users. To ensure we are smart, efficient and effective, activists must develop technology solutions that benefit those who are being abused.

House Bill 17-1040

Attorney General Coffman, will you explain the significance of House Bill 17-1040?

The Bill provides improved ability to prosecute traffickers. Polaris Project and Shared Hope rated CO very low². We’ve done much better legislatively, landing close to the top. We examined gaps in actual laws worked to close them.

Prosecutors discovered they did not have legal authority to do a wiretap. This was due to privacy issues; thus, wiretapping was not allowed in human trafficking cases. It is allowed for drug busts and gang related issues. Wiretapping allows for enhanced evidence with augmented identification of the perpetrator.

Wiretapping can be used in court, bypassing need for a victim’s personal appearance. Not being a witness allows time for healing and recovery, as it’s traumatic to relive their ghastly nightmares.

The Role of Data

Dr. Alejano-Steele, tell us about the Laboratory to Combat for Human Trafficking, which is located here in the Posner Center.

Human trafficking is a form of modern slavery—a multi-billion dollar criminal industry that denies freedom to 20.9 million people around the world.

And no matter where you live, chances are it's happening nearby. From the girl forced into prostitution at a truck stop, to the man discovered in a restaurant kitchen, stripped of his passport and held against his will. All trafficking victims share one essential experience: the loss of freedom.

Quote from the Polaris Project
To deal with this horrifically complex issue we need a mix of expertise, particularly data collection. We conduct training and research to obtain vital information and define a state game plan. Services include a statewide hotline, survivor leadership development program, and much more. Learn more at the LCHT website, and read our 2016 Colorado Human Trafficking Council Report, a comprehensive overview of work in CO. While human trafficking transpires globally on a daily basis, we must be aware that it happens locally. Programs like this amplify visibility of the issue and bring the problems of the world to the local stage.

Recognize the indicators of human trafficking so you can identify a potential trafficked victim. Know the products, services and activities available in CO to combat human trafficking, such as the Laboratory’s training. It is available for individuals, businesses, first responders, law enforcement, educators, federal employees, among others. Learn how we can affect the flow of trafficking by cutting off the supply.

Prevention, education and congregation draw awareness to the issue. Human trafficking is a multi-level international and local issue that has complex connections to systems of oppression. Anti-trafficking efforts are generally grouped into four broad categories, commonly known as the ‘4 Ps’: Prevention, Prosecution, Protection, and Partnership. Education and awareness moves us toward a better understanding of this dark modern-day slavery issue.
“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”
~ Anne Frank

Intersecting Sectors

Maria Trujillo, frame for us the scope of the problem in CO and how your work crosses political, non-profit and private concerns.

Human trafficking has no single victim or single industry. It can affect different industries and different people: males, females, LGBTQI. CO is unique with rural and urban centers representing dissimilar challenges. This not just an urban issue. It is not over there. It is YOUR community’s problem. The newly enacted laws are a huge success with record numbers of case filings and prosecutions.

The CO Human Trafficking Council was created in 2015 with 31 state-wide members, multiple disciplines and survivors. It is a bipartisan issue. Social workers and law enforcement connect to implement laws making sex trafficking a form of child abuse and neglect. Read our annual report on-line. The Council is expected to improve comprehensive services for victims and survivors, to assist in successful prosecution of human traffickers and to enhance prevention efforts across CO. Recently, the CO Dept. of Human Services was awarded $1,413,747 from the U.S. Dept. of Justice Office to combat human trafficking, provide essential services to trafficking victims and to work with the child victims and survivors, starting them on a path to recovery.

Awareness through Reading

Peg Brantley, you are a new activist working to end human trafficking. You became aware of local human trafficking by researching topics for your novels. How did this social justice issue compel you to write about such a dark subject?

TRAFFICKED is fourth in my series of crime fiction novels. I like to accentuate a relevant social issue that scares me and intrigues me before I begin writing. When Dr. Jalbert and I discussed trafficking as a potential new topic, she insisted that I focus on the story happening ‘here’ not ‘over there’. She made it clear to me that the story HAD to be local. The research just “about buried” me. While the people in the book are fictitious, the stories are based on real case studies from Denver. My goal with this novel is to start conversations about this terrible issue and to raise awareness.
AG Coffman, how is HB 17-1040 transferable? Given that you have participated at the UN level, how could this particular CO Human Trafficking Law be a template for other states or perhaps even other countries?

State attorneys frequently steal each other’s ideas. It could absolutely be a good starting point for other states and countries. One sign of engagement is that early on, we had to turn people away from participating on the human trafficking committee.

Recently, I went to Geneva to participate with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. I went before the UN to report what we see, here in CO, related to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The committee was skeptical of US progress. They had to overcome that bias. It was very educational for high-level global leaders to learn from someone at a state-level about what federal government executes vs. state.

What does HB 17 1040 mean for other countries? Some countries would, indeed, follow our lead. Yet others would be quick say ‘no’, it won’t work. Often it is because of a dislike and distrust of wiretapping.

Audience Questions

#1 - Which countries are leading the charge and doing a better job than us?

Answer: Northern Europe and Scandinavian countries have a stronger framework for helping survivors. Some countries see more trafficking than we do. They may not deal with it better than we do. One of the biggest questions is: should victims be excused from the repercussions of crimes due to forced intimidation.

We need to answer, “What is success?” Perhaps: “I got to go home” is a success, beyond prosecution. We need to recognize that we are at a point in history that trafficking may be classified broadly as child abuse, labor exploitation, and so on. Service providers need a checklist to classify it as both child abuse and human trafficking.

#2 - A State Department report, ranking nations, positions the USA at the top. We are doing well in comparison to many countries. Certain governments collude with trafficking rings. Are you seeing people coming to CO from other countries as trafficked victims?

Answers:

> Yes we see foreign nationals and US citizens. CO has an array of cultures and communities from all over the world. The CO Hotline has had representation of over 42 countries. Call 1-866-455-5075 if you suspect someone has been victimized.

> Keep learning, keep going deeper, look for organizations that speak to you, and volunteer.

> Talk about human trafficking.

> Write articles and editorials.

> Spread the conversation widely.

> Educate yourself. This panel is one good step, but don’t stop.

> Look at your own consumerism. We are all a part of the problem through our own consumerism. Have a “fair trade holiday.”

> Read the CO Action Plan, which delineates 18 task forces and work groups to support.

> Attend a deeper training to learn how to promote the end of human trafficking.

> Get involved! Text 51555: mobilize.
A brave survivor spoke. It took her 10 years to understand the toll trafficking extracted. It was years before she could speak up. She asked: what is being done to educate potential victims and the community?

**Answers:** The Colorado Human Trafficking Council (CHTC) is focused on training programs in six CO counties. CHTC created a foundational language and information for law enforcement, community and social service providers education. A gap is how to reach rural communities. A solution may be transferring to an online platform to eliminate geographical constraints.

The AG’s office ‘safe to tell’ program outlines tools to give tips identifying suspected victims. It informs on potential vulnerabilities or threats. The tool allows government to intervene as individuals can freely offer information that would have otherwise been inaccessible. It also allows kids to spot likely adverse peer situations, and to report it openly.

An example of education for kids is the Boulder “iEmphazie” non-profit. Their mission is to equip adults to empower youth to eradicate exploitation.

Conversations should start in our own homes. Talk about healthy relationships and what they look like. Point out where the boundaries are. Recognize what is consent. Conversations can filter victims and perpetrators.

**#4 - What are funding gaps?**

**Answers:** The fact that no one is jumping up to talk about funding points out that funding is a critical issue. There is not a real, sustained funding effort. Yet, agencies ARE making sure that appropriate training exists to discern what type of situation is occurring and when/how to apply blame to the victim or to the trafficker.

CO agencies have instituted new certification training, upping the requirement to acquire training in human trafficking. More money needs to flow to law enforcement training.

Some federal funds are flowing to state law enforcement, but it is nowhere near the $150 billion needed. We are in the millions for our funding. It is not an equal playing field, but we are crafty with the use of our meager funds.

**#5 - What role can an average citizen play?**

**Answers:** Generally, we advise using of the hotline rather than personally intervening. Do not put yourself in a dangerous position. Law enforcement feels it is detrimental to their efforts. For individuals to take on the law enforcement role is actually a negative and could hurt an investigation. Use the hotline. 1-866-455-5075

**#6 - Aside from education, what is the next big hurdle or obstacle, what’s the “tipping point?"**

**Answers:** There are multiple tipping points as it is such a huge issue. Traffickers are focused and coordinated. We need our flow of information to be more efficient and single-minded, just like the traffickers do.

In a recent public opinion survey, 90% understood the definition of trafficking. However in more detailed questions, knowledge levels fell. We need to continually educate. Does it happen in our community? Yes. In our country? Yes. In other countries, sure. You can be certain that human trafficking happens EVERYWHERE!

Celebrate prosecution successes of traffickers. Sr. State Prosecutor Janet Drake asked for a 616-year sentence. A judge handed down the longest term ever, 472 years. We did this right here in CO!
Labor trafficking is less of a focus and at present has fewer cases to prosecute. Legal recourse is unable to service well people who are labor trafficked. Immigration is a broad-sweeping issue at this juncture; until, we have nationwide immigration reform, we are going to continue to face many issues with immigrant trafficking.

The CO movement is only 12.5 years old. We are still assessing what the real tipping is and if it's different from prevention vs. prosecution. There cannot be a one size fits all! Solutions must be tailored to the affected communities.

#7 - From the college student’s perspective, how do victims take care of themselves and how can potential victims prevent it?

Answers: Look tough. (Crowd laughter) Seriously. Women and girls are targeted because they look vulnerable and are in a place that makes them more susceptible. Do not judge the victims. Don’t say “she allowed this to happen.” That is a negative response making the problem worse. Women didn’t let down their guard; they were targeted.

Take a self-defense class. Educate yourself on healthy relationships, and talk to friends and family about this important topic. Discuss consent, safety, relationships, awareness and risk.

Perpetrators do not always look how you think they might. Good-looking, seemingly trustworthy, people are sometimes malicious perpetrators. It can be woman. It can be an authority figure. Trust your intuition. Be wise. Safety first.

On your campus, talk to the dean and take classes. Use cyber security awareness. Investigate Heritage High School’s “Offline October”. Social media can be an entrapment mechanism. Learn how. Be vigilantly alert.

#8 - Moving from audience questions back to the panel, Dr. Jalbert asked: What one thought do you wish to leave with the audience that describes a future role to end human trafficking that is in alignment with HB 17-1040?

Answers:

Dr. Alejandro-Steele: Join the exchange, converse and follow up on your personal call to action. We need to see improvements. We need to work together to bring the conversation outside of this room.

A.G. Coffman: We have made great strides. Positive strides! Follow your instincts, call us and report to us. We will keep getting better at fighting human trafficking with individual action.

Ms. Trujillo: We are all part of the demand. Know the impact of your purchases. Change your consumerism. Demand change and accountability from Amazon, Starbucks and other companies.

(Note: a short discussion ensued around the topic of consumerism and fair trade. Look for this symbol on your purchases.)

Ms. Brantley: Pay attention to the experts and learn about what is going on around you. Understand the tendency to want to close your eyes. Instead open them, and do something. Use all the tools available to you.

Ms. Kosharovsky, JD: We know it’s a big topic, and it can feel overwhelming. However, we are all a piece of the puzzle. We all need to be proactive. Let’s build on each other’s work.
Dr. Jalbert: Recognize that our world, rural and urban, is at risk, vulnerable to vile exploitation. Combating human trafficking and sexual and labor exploitation demands activist efforts on all fronts: economic, social, legal and political at both local and global levels. The key to success is increasing our understanding about the scope of the problem, the harm it inflicts, and what we can actively do as individuals to end human trafficking.

**Audience Take Aways**

**Moderator Calls for Action - What will you do when you leave the Posner Center venue?**

1. As a college student, and an active young person, I will keep human trafficking in my mind, stay passionate about it and use SOCIAL MEDIA positively.
2. Go to my teenage son’s workplace to ensure the hotline is in the restaurant bathrooms.
3. Contribute my art to raise funds.
4. Identify resources to “take action.” Focus on the SDGs. Create awareness. Build global leaders of the future.
5. Join UNA Denver and ALIGHT.
6. Keep the conversation alive.
7. Be more involved with CU Denver and be more aware of what’s going on, ON CAMPUS.
8. Donate - tonight!
9. Highlight this issue with people who seem either uncaring or lack depth of understanding. Explain how this violence truly does affect us all, worldwide.
10. Attend the next event!
11. Don’t be a quiet bystander.

**Closure**

The program **Tackling Human Trafficking** expanded insights into how UN SDGs are supported by local positions, such as HB 17-1040, to end human trafficking. More activism is vital. As concerned citizens to end human trafficking, we must persistently educate ourselves and raise awareness for our aim to be achieved. Through deeper commitment by all societal sectors we can attain the promise of and aspiration to the 2030 UN agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.

Together, we can do it!

**Colorado Definition**

Human trafficking is defined as “the action or practice of illegally transporting people from one country or area to another, typically for the purposes of forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation.”

CO Department of Public Safety says that the “recruitment, harboring, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act,” but this does not require that the act to have been committed with, “force, fraud, or coercion.”

See: [https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/cdps-prod/home/human-trafficking.../legislation](https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/cdps-prod/home/human-trafficking.../legislation)

**Acronyms**

AG – Attorney General

ALIGHT – Alliance to Lead Impact in Global Human Trafficking

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals, aka Global Goals

UN – United Nations

UNA – United Nations Association

You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know.

*William Wilburforce*  
1759-1833
Speakers

- **Keynote**  
  **Ms. Rachel Pittman**  
  Is Membership and Programs, Sr. Director, UNA-USA at the UN Foundation, hailing from metro Washington, DC. The UNA-USA network encompasses 20,000+ members and 150 chapters. She cultivates membership, youth engagement, advocacy efforts and public awareness.

- **CO's 38th Attorney General Cynthia Coffman**  
  Tenure began at the CO Dept. of Law in 2005, as Chief Deputy Attorney General, serving for 10 years, acting as chief of staff and chief operating officer. As Chief Deputy, CO Law Week recognized Coffman as the Best Public Sector Lawyer in 2012. *Roll Call* named Coffman one of the Most Influential Women in State Politics in 2016. She was invited to speak at the UN’s Convention for the Right of the Child to describe Colorado’s approach to confronting human trafficking.

- **Marianna Kosharovsky, JD**  
  Is the Executive Director of ALIGHT, connecting trafficking survivors to free legal assistance through innovative technology. Last spring, she presented at the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Marianna brings her experience in human rights, law and international collaboration from work in the US and Eastern Europe/Russia with Sanctuary for Families and the Global Network for Public Interest Law.

- **Maria Trujillo, MA**  
  Has served as the Human Trafficking Program Manager at the CO Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice, Office for Victims Programs since 2014. She coordinates the CO Human Trafficking Council that was legislatively established by the General Assembly through HB 14-1273. Previously, she was six years in Houston, TX as the Executive Director of United Against Human Trafficking.

- **Dr. AnnJanette Alejano-Steele**  
  Is the Research/Training Director and Co-Founder of the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking and is a professor and interim chair at Metropolitan State University. She has taught, researched, trained and coordinated Metro State’s Human Trafficking Academic Response Team. Her expertise focuses on multicultural psychology, health access for vulnerable populations, and comprehensive services for victims of human trafficking.

- **Peg Brantley**  
  Is a member of Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers. She strives to lend her stories factual credibility. Peg graduated Aurora Citizens’ Police Academy, participated in the Writers’ Police Academy, and has interviewed crime scene and FBI investigators, human trafficking experts, and studied victim entrapment. She insists upon authentic locations for her stories. *TRAFFICKED* is her fourth published crime novel.

- **Moderator:**  
  **Dr. Susanne E. Jalbert**  
  Is a veteran global activist who understands that entrenched societal imbalances yield inequity? Economic development is her essential power tool to promote equitable, safe lives. Working with USAID, she has implemented over 85 projects in 50 countries on 4 continents, offers keynotes, and moderates community dialogues.

The speakers are advocates for change, in order to mobilize, stimulate and empower citizen activism to benefit ALL our local and global communities.

Human trafficking awareness day is **January 11**.

What will you do?
Tackling Human Trafficking

October 2017

Susanne E. Jalbert, Ph.D.
Owner, Jalbert Consulting

Telephone: 970 726 9440
Skype: sejalbert
E-Mail: sejalbert@aol.com
Internet: See Linkedin

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Photo Sources:
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Melanie Stephens

Clarifications:
Marianna Kosharovsky, JD., Executive Director of ALIGHT

Program Notes:
Casey Thomson-Comstock

Background Sources:
2. unadenver.org/, alightnet.org/, posnercenter.org/
4. polarisproject.org/human-trafficking
5. https://sharedhope.org/
6. combathumantrafficking.org
7. Read full report at: https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/cdps-prod/home/human-trafficking-council/annual-reports/report-2016
8. www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/
9. https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/cdps-prod/home/human-trafficking-council
11. http://pegbrantley.com/books/trafficked/
13. https://safe2tell.org/
17. Human trafficking details and statistics follow.
In 2016, according to Caroline Diemar, director of the national hotline for Polaris, a Washington D.C.-based trafficking policy and victims advocacy group, there were 120 human trafficking cases from Colorado. The cases were phoned into the hotline. Of those, 85 were cases of sex trafficking and 21 cases of labor trafficking.
Thank you UNA Denver Board, ALIGHT, the Posner Center, UNA members, keynote speaker Rachel Pittman, panelists, sponsors and audience for a remarkably informative evening.