

SASSE: Thank you all for making time. Welcome to the first subcommittee hearing on human trafficking and the intersection with our financial system.

Today, we'll be unpacking how Nebraska is fighting back to prevent and eradicate human trafficking in the state and across the nation. We are pleased to be joined by four genuine experts on this topic, folks who worked extensively to combat this scourge of human trafficking.

We'll be hearing from Doug Peterson who is the Attorney General of Nebraska. He will be discussing successful human trafficking task force that was stood up in our state in 2015 as well as what Nebraska's doing beyond to help educate neighboring states. Since 2016, the human trafficking task force has trained over 3,000 individuals in Nebraska and it consists of five regional teams.

We're also going to hear from Julie Slama, State Senator. Julie has introduced and worked to pass comprehensive legislation to fight human trafficking. That's LB 519. She'll be speaking about the prevalence of human trafficking in the rural areas as well as the intersection between human trafficking, sex trafficking and broader poverty across the Midwest.

Crysta Price who is the Founder and CEO of the Human Trafficking Initiative labs known as HDI is joining us. When she was a student, Crysta co-led a team that created a theoretical model of international trafficking flows and this led to a project focusing on the near-complete lack of data on domestic trafficking ultimately resulting in the use of online advertisements, data science and network analysis to identify potential trafficking networks within the human trafficking world. HDI is recognized as one of the world's leading experts in fighting human trafficking.

Finally, we'll hear from David Murray who's the Vice President for Product Development and Services at the Financial Integrity Network. David will be discussing how criminal organizations can avoid detection through using financial institutions to shield their behavior.

David has developed market-leading counter-illicit finance programs when he's worked for the global banks, money services businesses and other fintechs. Before joining FIN in 2017, for nine years prior, David served as the Senior Advisor at the Department of -- U.S. Department of Treasury where he advised the undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence and he coordinated more than 700 people working in the bank secrecy regulation space, international financial transparency standards and more.

When you think about human trafficking and as we've had a number of media reach out to us in advance of this field hearing of the U.S. Senate Banking Committee, people don't often think of Nebraska. It turns out that Nebraska like all the other states have a huge human trafficking problem. This is scourged by many people's testaments.

There are more slaves on the face of the earth today than in any point in all of human history. Nebraska's fortune though to be one of the leading states trying to utilize all the available resources to combat and prevent human trafficking.

Several organizations that have made Nebraska a state to look to in combating this evil are here today and our unicameral has pushed back through passing strong legislation to address trafficking and to go after human traffickers.

We have leading experts in the field with us today recognize throughout the world because of their activities to study the negative effects of this stain on our society and people who take advantage of the most vulnerable in our neighborhoods obviously should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law and our home state is leading the charge on that.

Moms and dads have enough normal things to worry about without having the kind of evil of human trafficking to be something that we know exists across our state. We cannot keep letting victims down time and again as this happened for many decades in the country and this hearing is trying to look at the intersection between human trafficking and financial services networks to figure out what more can be done.

Again, I want to thank all four of you for appearing before the subcommittee hearing of the U.S. Senate Banking Committee. I'll look forward to all of the testimony from all four witnesses, and we'll now proceed to that testimony.

We will begin with Doug Peterson, Nebraska's Attorney General. Thank you, General.