



NC Human Trafficking Commission: General Meeting
Thursday, December 14, 2023, 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM
WebEx through the NC Judicial Center / Hickory Board Room (A-1-101)

Thank you from Ryan Boyce, NCAOC Director!

10:08 AM – Call to Order & Roll Call Attendance

Amy Auth, Commissioner

Commissioner Auth opened the meeting and called to order. She then conducted a verbal roll call to document attendance. Commissioners in attendance at the meeting were Amy Auth, Judge Wilson, Deana Joy (joined 10:21 am), Kindl Detar, Marc Nichols (joined 10:40 am), Tina Pennington (exited 10:57 am), Billy West (exited 10:22 am), Angelica Wind (exited 11:32 am).

Also in attendance were Commission Executive Director, Christine Long, Grants Administrator, Kathy Estrada, Grants Managers, Jacqueline Kehinde, Mel Gilles, and Kristen Howe, Data Manager, Ashawntee Cabello, Court Management Specialist, Ashley Tauscher, and Administrative Secretary, Lauren Amato. Members of the public were also able to view or listen to the meeting via WebEx.

10:11 AM – Ethics Reminder

Amy Auth, Commissioner

Commissioner Auth read the required ethics statement. She then thanked all in attendance but refrained from approving the minutes because there wasn't a quorum.

10:11 AM – Committee Reports and Action Items

Amy Auth, Commissioner

Legislative Committee

Christine Long on behalf of Caitlin Brooks

Commission Executive Director Christine Long provided a brief update. We have been working with a consultant, Bill Woolf, on a legislative package. It's not a legislative package specifically for the Commission, but it is something we've been asked to provide input to and help guide along the way. Back in September we brought in various leaders to meet with Bill and discuss ideas and needs. The draft of the package is complete and will be coming soon to be reviewed. We're hoping and very excited about the material being put together.

Public Health Committee

Amy Auth, Commissioner

Commission Executive Director Christine Long announced we do not currently have an update from the Public Health Committee. We were excited to welcome Dr. Myers and have set up a meeting with her as she has expressed interest in chairing the Committee.

Appropriations Committee

Angelica Wind, Committee Chair

(See Appropriations Report)

Commissioner Wind reported the Appropriations Committee has been very active, in many positive and challenging ways. Recently, there was a scoring committee for competitive funding, which included developing a small scoring committee to review and score the applications. Then based on those recommendations, the Appropriations Committee voted on which organizations would move forward and receive funding. She then handed over the report to Grants Administrator, Kathy Estrada, for the HTC grant updates. Kathy talked about 3 grants and provided some other updates.

Section 16.20 – Grants for Nonprofit Organizations Providing Services to Victims of Human Trafficking

There are 17 agencies that have received the first disbursement payment, and 16 agencies that are set to receive the second disbursement payment in the next two weeks. We have received and processed 16 quarterly financial and progress report packets. There have been 5 site visits conducted to date. More will be scheduled in the new year.

Section 16.23 – Economic Assistance Funds for Organizations that Provide Services to Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

We had a large disbursement of over \$5 million go out for the first disbursement. The Appropriations Committee approved 2 quarterly payments for the first disbursement, which is why it was so much larger than the second one. Initially, we took a while to get the money out, which is why two payments were released at once. There will be a little under \$2.4 million disbursed before the end of this year. In total, around 140 awards have gone out for disbursement: some for sexual assault agencies and some for domestic violence agencies. The two grant managers assigned to this section are reviewing report packages now.

Section 16.21 – Competitive Grants for Nonprofit Organizations Providing Services to Victims of Human Trafficking

The Request for Proposals (RFP) was released in August and closed in September. We met with the Appropriations Committee and created the scoring committee to process applications. We received 24 applications, however, only 20 made it to scoring. The other 4 applications did not move on for various reasons including: ineligibility, failure to submit SAMS number, nonprofit status, and withdrawal. The agencies were granted an extension to fix them but did not within the allotted time to do so. Thankfully we are having a second round so there will be another opportunity to apply. The minimum amount that could be applied for was \$50,000 and the maximum amount was \$200,000; the same will apply in round 2. The applicants applied for either a one-year or two-year grant cycle. There were 8 people on the scoring committee that reviewed and scored the 20 applications. One reviewer declined to score an application due to a conflict of interest. To be eligible for funding, the applicant had to receive an average score of at least 50 out of a possible 100 points. On November 20th, there were 11 awards (out of 20) approved in round 1 for a total of \$2,006,246.00. This leaves \$1,793,754.00 available for round 2. Round 1 is to enhance the services to victims of human trafficking. The list of approved agencies and their scores can be found in the report. The scoring matrix was based on a few factors in Senate Bill 105, such as geographical reach, risk assessment level, self-assessment, goals, etc. Round 2 is to develop, strengthen, or expand human trafficking victim service programs to help mitigate the increased risk of human trafficking. Round 1 and 2 purposes differ, but the maximum and minimum grant awards remain the same. The RFP for round 2 will be released before the holidays and will be open for 60 days, versus the original 30 days. The grant manager for this section has been meeting with agencies that did not receive funding to discuss ways to strengthen application and provide feedback.

Monitoring Update

We have been working on trying to get a grant management system and have received quotes from three different vendors. The selected vendor is now moving forward with procurement to get under contract. We've secured how the system is supposed to be set up but are not under contract yet. The contract for the program would last for five years. Implementation will take around 3 months. Additional details will be available after we go under contract.

For section 16.23, site visits need to start being completed. The grant managers are occupied with the reports because it was decided to prioritize those before site visits. Hopefully by March we will have some site visits going.

10:30 AM – How do disability rights intersect with anti-human trafficking work? How can we use disability laws both to support victims and to combat trafficking?

Tara Muller, Policy Attorney
Disability Rights North Carolina
(See Disability Presentation)

Commissioner Auth introduced Tara Muller with Disability Rights North Carolina (DRNC). Every state and territory in the US has a Protection and Advocacy Organization (P&A). DRNC is the P&A in North Carolina, dedicated to advancing the legal rights of people with all types of disabilities, of all ages, statewide. The services are free, and there are no income requirements. DRNC is mandated to do certain tasks including monitoring facilities across the state anywhere where people with disabilities get services. DRNC is devoted to all ages and all types of disabilities in NC.

The first time we publicly saw the intersection of disability and trafficking was the instance at Henry's Turkey Farm. It was a farm where a bunch of adult men with intellectual disabilities were recruited to work on this farm. For decades, the townspeople were aware of these men working at the farm, but no one knew they were being trafficked. The men were working against their will in really terrible conditions. Over the years we have learned of more and more situations like this one. People with disabilities are more likely to become victims of trafficking. There are more opportunities, barriers to reporting / credibility, and the intersectionality with poverty. People with disabilities are more likely to experience trauma, especially sexual abuse (NIH). People who have experienced trafficking are likely to develop disabilities i.e. mental illness, traumatic brain injury, etc. There are a lot of statistics about intersectionality. People with high ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) scores are often diagnosed with disability. Children with intellectual or developmental disabilities are overall less likely to be resilient. The legal definition of disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or record of such an impairment; or being "regarded" as having such an impairment. Both the definition and ADA protections are broader than you think. It helps to get a diagnosis of a disability in a lot of ways, for example helping them connect to services.

The reason it's important to keep disability law in mind when doing trafficking work is there are lots of ways that having that diagnosis can help. We often see people who have never been diagnosed call DRNC thinking they have one condition but there may be a better diagnosis for them. The most important assistance in our state for people with disabilities is Medicaid. Medicaid is generally thought of for low-income people but it's also for people with serious disabilities. Once you get into that disability track within Medicaid, there are lots of specialized services available only to certain disabilities. Medicaid can help with many things, and not just traditional health related things. They can help with housing, job assistance, education, etc. Disability laws may open doors to services, reduce the likelihood of high-risk placements, allow for accommodations, connect children to school resources, and subject offenders to liability for crimes. An example of specialized services

would be a new service called 1915(i) that just rolled out. It provides home and community-based services to people with intellectual disability, substance use disorder, and serious mental illness. Other services like this one are available if you have a diagnosis and if you know to request it and connect to those services. The focus is on whole person care like community access, housing, safety, transportation. Other common resources include Disability Access Coordinators, NC Centers for Independent Living, The National Alliance of Mental Illness – NC Chapter (NAMI-NC), The Arc of NC (intellectual / developmental disabilities), Autism Society of NC (links are in the report). Make sure to look for a possible disability link in victims with trauma histories and challenging behaviors (erratic behavior, concentration problems, poor judgment, etc.) The commonly missed conditions are FASD, TBI, anxiety and phobias. A diagnosis can help the victim connect with resources. There are many disabilities overlooked and that are not included in our normal array of assessment tools in NC. Some frequently asked questions were included.

1. Is a housing program allowed to require a full psychological prior to agreeing to admit someone?

No, most likely this would be deemed discriminatory (screening people based on disability), unless a qualifying mental health diagnosis is a prerequisite to receive services. In some cases, the info could be requested during an evaluation of a request for accommodation, but only if it relates to the request.

(Per 24 CFR 100.202, housing providers may make some inquiries, provided that they make those inquiries of ALL applicants (not just disabled applicants), and only if the inquiry is to see if an applicant 1. qualifies for some priority available to persons with disabilities, 2. is a current user of a controlled substance, or 3. qualifies for a dwelling that's only available to persons with disabilities/with a particular type of disability.)

2. Is a shelter / housing program allowed to dismiss or turn away applicants that are using illegal substances?

It depends. If they have a history of substance use but are not currently using, then they are fully protected under the ADA. But if they are currently using illegal substances, then the ADA would likely not apply to this type of shelter program. In that case, the shelters can refer them to a SUD treatment and residential program for assistance.

3. Is a housing program allowed to drug test participants in their programs or being admitted to their programs?

It depends, and the rules are a bit unclear in the housing context. If a person has a history of using illegal drugs, then the ADA suggests that a person can be drug tested for housing when doing so is a reasonable policy. See 42 U.S.C. § 12210(b). But if a shelter is drug testing everyone as part of admission (or testing randomly) then it's unclear when the practice may constitute discrimination. We recommend having a clear written policy in place, and applying that policy consistently.

4. Is a shelter / housing provider allowed to refuse entry to someone who is unable to get onto a top bunk?

No. If the inability to climb is due to a mobility-related disability, the housing provider must accommodate the disability by finding them accessible sleeping arrangements, as long as the request does not pose an undue hardship on the provider.

Executive Director Christine Long notes that she didn't know about these resources either when working in direct services. It is recommended that people try to use the website before calling for technical assistance. Christine believes agencies are thinking about ADA but may not know the best way to apply it. There are a lot of agencies here that prescreen based on psychical or psychological evaluation. She encourages anyone listening to investigate, use this resource, and take that extra step with victims that have a diagnosed disability. She noted from her personal experience that house families with children is difficult, as well as navigating around service animals. Commissioner Nichols asked if the diagnosis stays with the individual with a record to carry forward throughout the state, how do you prove it? Tara responded that that is a really recurring problem that they see in this transient population moving around that may not have access to the same medical records. Medicaid has a disaster relief branch that hands out plastic binders to keep all

important documents in in case of evacuation needs. She recommends that people keep hard copies of medical records that document a diagnosis. Today, most doctors have electronic records, but they can still fall through the cracks. When people are reentering the community, it's possible they don't have proof of identification anymore and it takes a while to get that information back. The Medicaid case management is supposed to keep all that information for you. If you don't have that, it's recommended to keep hard copies. There are some groups that pass out cards to inform people of the disability, for example, the autism society has windshield stickers so that when law enforcement approaches the car they're notified of the disability and that the individual might react differently. Court Management Specialist Ashley asked if there were any restrictions on accessing resources if you've been involved in the criminal justice system. Tara replied that there are no barriers to accessing Medicaid services or any of the other legal aid services that she is aware of. As far as other things like housing are concerned, though, there are going to be barriers. MSW Intern Sontanna asked if there were people answering the phones for intake and if they were bound by confidentiality internally. Tara confirmed they have people answering phones so it might just take a few days to get a call back depending on the situation. They are also bound by confidentiality, just like any lawyer would be. Anytime they're providing technical assistance, they want to speak with the person with the disability. DRNC contact information can be found in the report.

11:00 AM – Committee Reports and Action Items

Amy Auth, Commissioner

Public Safety Committee Marc Nichols, Committee Chair

Commissioner Auth introduced Commissioner Nichols for the Public Safety report. Commissioner Nichols talked about the IPC (Interdiction for the Protection of Children) training program that came to us 2 years ago from Texas DPS (Department of Public Safety). He shared a story from the first day of training where an officer utilized the tools taught and implemented them that same day. This training is completely new to law enforcement; they are learning what to look for and it's victim-centered, which was not taught before. Since that first day, LEO (law enforcement officers) have been training with our IPC team. Commissioner Nichols introduced two troopers – Sergeant Nales and Trooper Cody Allen.

Interdiction for the Protection of Children: Update and success story

**Sgt. Mark Nales & Tpr. Cody Allen,
NC Highway Patrol**

Sgt. Nales provided an update about what were doing with the IPC program here in NC. It's been vetted, it works, and we're going to share some success stories about how effective it is. Back on November 28th and 29th, 52 troopers came to the training hosted at the Raleigh training academy. This was the first time the training was hosted in house for the highway patrol. A few other agencies attended, but we really tried to make a targeted impact on the highway patrol. The SHP (State Highway Patrol) is the biggest net in NC when it comes to talking about law enforcement. The goal is to have one training per quarter with a similar turnout of attendees; that would be 200 troopers trained a year at minimum. We have some very motivated instructors as far as raising awareness on the patrol. There has been interest expressed in getting on the instructor team as well. Sgt. Nales gave the floor to Tpr. Allen to share his story.

Tpr. Allen has been a trooper for the SHP since 2016. He had taken several body language and deception courses prior to attending this course. The IPC training provided him with indicators of what to look for and the resources available to victims. Less than a week after taking the course, Tpr. Allen implemented the IPC training on the road. Another trooper, Tpr. Thomas in Vance County was responding to a hit and run vehicle collision in Henderson. Tpr. Thomas arrived on scene, got information of the suspect vehicle, and broadcast it out. Tpr. Hera saw that vehicle a short time later and performed a traffic stop. The driver, a 17-year-old male, stopped and fled on foot. In the vehicle there was a 16-year-old male, an 18-year-old female, and a

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15-year-old female. Tpr. Allen arrived on scene to assist Tpr. Hera and started interviewing some of the passengers. As Tpr. Allen went to get information from the passengers, he started noticing indicators. The 15-year-old female was dressed inappropriately for her age and the season. She didn't want to make any eye contact either and when she did her focus quickly went back down to her hands. Tpr. Allen knew something was not right. The registered owner of the vehicle was a mid-20s female that had been reported missing. After talking with some of the other passengers, he discovered that same mid-20s female was being "tricked out" by her boyfriend. Her boyfriend's cousin was the driver of the vehicle. The 15-year-old wasn't verbally telling them anything, but her body language was. They interviewed her and got in contact with her mother. Her mother was unaware of her whereabouts but responded quickly to the scene, expressing concerns about the safety of her daughter. The 15-y-o girl was a constant runaway, and at that time, was a runaway that hadn't been reported yet. Tpr. Allen and Tpr. Hera were able to go directly to the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) to get that family resources. Sgt. Nales noted that Tpr. Allen went directly to the Executive Director of the CAC, and the Director committed that it would be a priority. Currently, we're waiting for confirmation of the resources being delivered. One of the main red flags that came up was the hit and run being tied into a missing person. The IPC training provided Tpr. Allen with the knowledge and resources needed to help the people in this situation. The course teaches how to pick up on indicators for the high-risk threats to children and people in general. There were a lot of minors in the car; a nice dodge charger vehicle. We believe it was being used as a grooming technique, and the leader of the organization was the cousin of the driver. It appears right now that the individuals who own the vehicle are grooming the teenagers by way of the one driving that night. It's an ongoing event that we are going to continue to follow up on. Tpr. Kellaway also just finished the IPC training. Two days after Tpr. Allen's stop, Tpr. Kellaway down in Montgomery County, was assisting a deputy at a routine traffic stop. The deputy hadn't taken the IPC course yet. Tpr. Kellaway noticed that one of the vehicles coming through had 2 transient individuals with a 13-year-old male in the back seat and began to observe indicators. The two individuals had no clue who this boy was in the back seat. The two people couldn't tell the troopers the boy's name and vice versa. There was an exchange of money that the 13-y-o was supposed to be a part of. It's an ongoing investigation that just happened. Tpr. Kellaway realized there were resources available and began making phone calls. He contacted Master Tpr. Cuff, who immediately began helping and they were able to reunite the 13-y-o back with his guardian, who was his grandmother. She had no clue where he had been that night. Our goal is to do this training quarterly and spread it across the state. Commissioner Wind expressed her gratitude for the work they do. Hoke County Executive Director (ED) Leon asked if the training was available to agencies that work with human trafficking. Sgt. Nales replied that one key element of the training is that it's multidisciplinary; it's not just limited to law enforcement. There are representatives from victim services, and there are a lot of civilians that attend these courses. There is a vetting process to gain access to it, and Commissioner Auth mentioned that Executive Director Christine Long may have some additional information that might help. Christine noted that we have helped to host a few of the trainings, but it can be difficult because you must consider space and food. We are hoping to help get more of these scheduled, and if there are ways that Commissioners can help to get these scheduled, we would love to get these on the books. Commissioner Nichols echoed that we are really going to push to try and get funding to make more of these classes happen.

11:31 AM – General Staff Report

Christine Long
(See Staff Report)

Commission Executive Director Christine Long provided some updates. She thanked the hard work and dedication of the grant staff and Appropriations Committee. There's much more we could say in these reports because of the depth of the work. We have had a couple trainings since our last meeting including the November IPC training in Raleigh. Lieutenant Davis and Master Trooper Cuff set up this training with minimal

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help from the Commission. We also did a training for Randolph County Family Crisis Center, one of our grantees. They were interested in learning about a regional response type of model, a multi-disciplinary team in their community that can respond to human trafficking. It can be challenging to complete all training requests across the state with what we have. Thankfully, if it is in an area where we know we have a provider willing, we reach out. Traci Klein covered a training requested for hotel employees in Sneads Ferry; thank you, Traci! There's quite a lot lining up in January and February which we will update you on in the next meeting. Section 16.22 Facility Improvement Grants were not included in the Appropriations report. The Appropriations Committee has done everything they can with this section. These grants were for facility improvements to sexual assault and domestic violence agencies. This is state funding, so it is not a part of the pandemic relief money that the other sections have. Lauren and I oversee the monitoring of the spending with the agencies. There are 72 awarded contracts. The project began in 2022 and ended June 30, 2023, but we were then allowed extensions in the state budget that was finalized in October. There are 45 extensions going out this week to agencies that weren't able to spend all the funding. There are 26 agencies that have moved to close-out status. We've created the forms and processes and have a meeting with legal tomorrow to make sure they approve those forms. One agency is going through non-compliance procedures.

When the state budget was finalized, we were appropriated \$500,000 recurring funds to give out in additional grants for direct services. The maximum amount to be given to an agency is \$50,000 per year, per grantee. We can follow the 2-year state budget and potentially award agencies \$50,000 for two years so that there are less grantees we're managing over that state budget period. As soon as we get section 16.21 round 2 out, the Appropriations Committee will move to discussing the new grant received. We revisited the grants management system because we knew what we could develop if we could get it up and running fast enough to help with the pandemic release grants. We plan on making it a 5-year contract to pay the bulk of the cost upfront. There will be an annual cost to keep it going. This grant management system will make the process so much easier for everyone involved. The position for the new grant is posting any day now and is a temporary position that must end on June 30, 2025. These grants will need to be encumbered in this fiscal year.

Our Court Management Specialist, Ashley Tauscher, has been working continuously on updating our Resource Directory. She has contacted 231 agencies/entities but has only received responses from 96. We plan to upload what we have so far to our Resource Library. If you are not a part of it, please reach out! Before COVID, we had 14 functioning regional response teams (RRTs) made up of law enforcement, service providers, and others willing to help to respond to human trafficking calls and needs 24/7. We have less than half of those functioning now. Even those functioning are not functioning at the levels that they were. It's a need we've seen and a gap that has happened over the last few years. Of the missing responses, about 50% of them are from our nongovernmental agencies (NGOs). This speaks to the possibility that quite a few NGOs aren't doing human trafficking work anymore or not doing it at the same level where they feel the need to be in the directory. This brings up the next point of standardization planning. We've talked about this as a Commission for years; it's why we wrote the Standards for direct services. We want to work towards a process where we have a resource directory and we know who in that directory meets our standards of service, someone vetted and approved to provide services that someone could call in a situation. We are starting this process up again because it's a huge need. Even seeing that the agencies meet the standards is a hard process because they can say one thing but do another. We're trying to use the risk assessments and grant process to look at what we can do with agencies to know they're meeting the standards. When our next speaker, Natalia, presents on the Debt Bondage Repair Act (DBRA), that can be another thing that we can notate on our resource directory. We will be able to confirm that the agency has been approved by the attorney general's office to provide this service. This all ties into the National Human Trafficking Hotline. One of the very first things the Commission did was to decide to use the national hotline as our statewide number. The hotline is overwhelmed with calls, but they are still our best avenue for victim assistance. They have over 200 languages available and have a

directory of resources in the state. When calls come into the hotline, we help by directing them to resources in NC. The RRTs used to be the place because they had all the needed resources. Since 2020 and all the changes we've seen, we do not have enough responders for the national hotline. This is not unique to NC, but the hotline has taken heat recently about the amount of time it takes to get through sometimes. Their call volume has gone up, and they've seen turnover too. Part of this falls on NC too though because if we don't have service providers we can point them to, they spend more time on the call to get the needed resources. We work a lot with South Carolina; they have a task force that does similar work to ours. This January, we plan to meet with the hotline in DC to talk about relaunching things in our states to help them be timelier. In the future, we will reach out to agencies that are willing to do 24/7 response and then move on to vetting. The protocols with the hotline would then need revising.

January is human trafficking awareness month. We are still understaffed and therefore not holding an event as a Commission. We have collected several events happening across the state we've been cataloging and will work with some of the groups involved. Commissioners will be asked if they will be able to attend these different events to represent the Commission during January. Then we can push awareness as much as possible. The Commission used to award outstanding service awards to recognize the work being done for human trafficking. We would like to start issuing those again if we can procure them in time for a few of the events happening. We will be attending the Charlotte Conference put on by the Safe House Project at the end of January. Then we are hosting the Region IV meeting for the Administration for Children and Families at the end of January as well. Our regional group has 8 states and meets every 6 months in person. We are also in the works of rewriting Nancy's position.

11:53 AM – Becoming certified to assist victims through the Debt Bondage Repair Act.

**Natalia Botella, Special Deputy Attorney General
and Deputy Director, Public Protection Section**
(DBRA overview - requested)

Commissioner Auth mentioned about a year ago that we had Sarah Byrne present on the DBRA. Natalia Botella is here today to talk about becoming certified to assist victims through the DBRA. Commissioner Detar gave the floor to Natalia to talk about the program. There is a new credit repair process for survivors of human trafficking. As a result of the federal Debt Bondage Repair Act, as of July 25, 2022, many victims and survivors of human trafficking can have information that resulted from their trafficking experience blocked from their credit reports. Even though this law is over a year old, organizations serving victims may be unaware of this new form of relief. Even for those aware, the law requires proof of status as a victim; and that has been a barrier. To help with the underutilization of this relief, Sarah Byne with Moore & Van Allen reached out and the NC Department of Justice (DOJ) is now seeking organizations to become authorized to provide victim verification documentation so that victims and survivors can clean up their credit. Credit reports impact many fundamental necessities of everyday life; the ability to rent an apartment or buy a home, obtain insurance, find a job, or obtain fairly priced credit. The price of the credit is going to depend on your credit score. The right place to go to get the free annual credit reports (from all 3 credit bureaus) that are provided by law is annualcreditreport.com. The survivors or their representatives can submit one of three things to the credit bureau. The first is proof of identity. While there is no single way to prove identity, the law requires credit bureaus to work with and offer different ways to prove identity. That might be answering a series of questions that only that person should know about their history. The second is documentation created or signed by a government agency or authorized non-governmental organization that states they are a survivor of trafficking. This documentation can be as simple as a letter a couple sentences long saying that the individual is a victim of trafficking. The third is identification of what specific information should be blocked. Some examples will be provided later. Typically, it takes a really long time to repair your credit and it has to be built up over time by paying bills on time, etc. The DBRA process is different and moves quickly. After receiving a submission,

consumer reporting agencies (or credit bureaus) must temporarily block the adverse information within 4 business days and make a final determination within 25 business days. The common three credit bureaus are Experian, TransUnion, and Equifax. These bureaus as well as a number of specialty credit reporting agencies (rental, medical, banking) are governed by this law. Information must be submitted to each credit bureau individually to get information removed from that specific credit report. The third item survivors or their representatives can submit to credit bureaus is identification of what specific information should be blocked. Anything that appears on a credit report can be blocked. Some examples that might come into play for survivors could be prior evictions, non-payment of rent, loan defaults, unpaid bills that went to a collection agency, bankruptcy filings, or criminal convictions that were the result of their trafficking experience. Through this new process started at DOJ, NC organizations working with victims and survivors of human trafficking can help. The applications are now open, and NC based organizations can apply to become authorized to provide victim verification documentation. Over 20 applications have been received since it opened earlier this month. The law allows government organizations to set their own criteria for how to approve an organization. As a threshold matter, organizations are eligible to apply if they meet one of the following categories: 1) currently enrolled in the NC DOJ Address Confidentiality Program, 2) are listed on the NC Human Trafficking Commission Resource List, or 3) are Council for Women and Youth Involvement grantees. The latter two lists are linked on the application so organizations can check whether they are on them. So far, a number of organizations have met more than one category. The QR code on the presentation links to the application form. For the organizations that have applied already, a letter will be provided soon that verifies the NCDNJ has authorized them under the DBRA to provide this documentation. Natalia is happy to answer questions that might come up; her email address is nbotella@ncdoj.gov.

12:04 PM – Public Comment

Amy Auth, Commissioner

Commissioner Auth opened the floor for public comment. Pam Strickland had a comment. Pam is the founder of NC Stop Human Trafficking and co-founder of the NC Demand Reduction Task Force. The Task Force had a 4-session series of webinars in November about labor trafficking, how to address demand, and how to reduce demand. Christine was a panelist on the final webinar. The goal was to determine the components of a comprehensive statewide plan to reduce demand for labor trafficking in NC. The Task Force is hosting a 3-day training for law enforcement in February in partnership with Wake Tech. The training costs \$150 and is about how to do a reverse sting operation in which buyers of sex would be charged. There are still openings, and we invite listeners to share this information with your local LEO and invite them to participate in that. The Task Force is also having their first statewide conference on May 1st and 2nd at the McKimmons Center. Registration is not open yet but save the date. On January 10th, Pam will do a webinar called overview of the anti-human trafficking movement in North Carolina. She invited people to contact her if there is something going on across the state that should be a part of the overview; her email address is pam@encstophumantrafficking.org. Latiana Appleberry had a comment. Latiana is the executive director of Survivor Network NC, a survivor-led organization who specifically works with the survivors of career coaching, professional development, and paid opportunities using their stories and the things that have happened to them in their trafficking experiences. Latiana thanked the Commission for the work they do to support anti-trafficking work across the state. Lala noted they are also hosting their first brunch and learn fundraiser in honor of human trafficking month. Typically, during human trafficking awareness month, agencies and providers are spreading awareness and talking about how to help survivors. Survivor Network NC is working to provide workshops that will focus on safe allyship in three distinct areas and how anti-trafficking allies can support and foster an effective and safe working relationship with survivors of human trafficking. It's in Durham and will be used as an opportunity to wrap up human trafficking awareness month the first week in February. For more information, visit survivornetworknc.org. Latiana invites everyone to get involved and share.

12:10 PM – Adjournment

Amy Auth, Commissioner

Commissioner Auth asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Nichols moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Detar seconded the motion and Commissioner Auth adjourned the meeting. The date is to be determined for our upcoming meeting in 2024.