



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity
CWCSEO
Connecticut General Assembly



PRESS RELEASE

FROM: Trafficking in Person's Council Chairs

DATE: January 4, 2024

RE: Respond to Unsealed Epstein Court Documents

Sex trafficking happens far too often across this country, and here in Connecticut. Yesterday's release, coming just three days into Human Trafficking Awareness Month, of previously sealed court documents related to Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislane Maxwell's crimes illustrate the scale of their operation and underscore their influence amongst powerful members of society.

While it is easy to dismiss Epstein and Maxwell's actions as isolated behavior perpetrated by bad actors, the release of nearly 200 names associated with one survivor's civil case demonstrates just how many people were witness to or complicit in the abuse.

"I have learned a lot during my time as Chair of the Trafficking in Persons Council and what Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell did to trick vulnerable young girls with the promise of fame and fortune only to have adult men pay to sexually assault them is sex trafficking," said State Representative Jillian Gilchrest and tri-chair of the Trafficking in Persons Council. "Much of the attention is focused on the names of those associated with Epstein. As their identities become known, regardless of political party or professional background, we must recognize that whoever these individuals are, they held privilege and power and they chose to associate with Epstein and Maxwell rather than seek help for the girls who were being sold for sex. I expect the men whose names are released will deny any sexual activity with the girls Epstein sex trafficked. But, these men did associate with him, so why didn't they do anything to stop Epstein and Maxwell? Men need to take an active role in creating a more just and equitable society."

Prior to the release of the documents on Wednesday, some expected to see a list of the people who directly engaged in sex trafficking; however, there were few new revelations. Instead, the court documents provide further evidence of how sex tracking works. Trafficking doesn't happen in isolation. It is supported by a vast network of people who are complicit, silent, or participating and it thrives in a culture that normalizes sexual violence.

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Here in Connecticut, we are not immune to these harsh realities and trafficking impacts all our communities, but like in the Epstein and Maxwell case, it disproportionately impacts women, girls and other vulnerable populations.

“Through our Regionalized Human Trafficking Recovery Taskforce, child advocacy centers, and multidisciplinary teams, we witness the impact trafficking has on children and vulnerable populations in Connecticut. The Epstein and Maxwell case serves as an example and reminder of how pervasive trafficking is and how it can go unaddressed without full community awareness, willingness to hold traffickers accountable, and resources to support survivors” said Krystal Rich, executive director of the Connecticut Children’s Alliance and tri-chair of the Trafficking in Persons Council “We have made great strides in recognizing and responding to trafficking here in CT, but we have more work to do especially when it comes to well-resourced services for survivors and a robust understanding of what it means to prevent trafficking from occurring in the first place. While Connecticut has many dedicated providers in this area, the resources to properly fund these services are alarmingly limited and, unfortunately, are only dwindling.”

We all have a role in interrupting and preventing trafficking, and while all instances of trafficking do not look the same, there are lessons to be gleaned from this case.

“The unsealing of more Epstein and Maxwell court documents is significant to not only shed light on the true scope and depth of the crimes they committed, but also to explore how communities can take action to prevent and identify future harm,” said Beth Hamilton, executive director of the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence and tri-chair of the Trafficking in Persons Council. “It’s critical for survivors to have access to healing, justice, and support but we also have to do the hard work of digging into the root causes of trafficking and sexual violence to prevent future harm.”

If you or someone you know is in need of support, contact the statewide free and confidential sexual assault crisis hotlines at 888-999-4454 (English) or 888-568-8332 (Spanish) or visit www.endsexualviolencect.org to find your local sexual assault services program.

Reach out to the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 (text:233733) or visit humantraffickinghotline.org to find resources and help.

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