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[Human Trafficking](#)

28 12 2009



By [Timothy D. Naegele\[1\]](#)

Lots of Americans may not know that human trafficking exists in the Twenty-First Century, much less in their hometowns and where they work. The Kansas City Star has a fine article on the subject entitled, “[U.S. system to find, help victims of trafficking is broken](#),” which everyone should read. It is an eye-opener; however, it merely touches on one of the greatest tragedies in the world today, which must be dealt with and eradicated.

In comments following the article, I wrote:

This is a terrific article; and its authors, Mike McGraw and Laura Bauer, are to be congratulated on such fine reporting. Seldom have I seen an excellent piece of investigative reporting about this subject of such importance.

Years ago I read an article about a Korean girl who began as a “comfort woman” for the Japanese military during World War II. She and other women traveled with the military, and were forced to provide non-stop sex to Japanese soldiers. Toward the end of the war, somehow she escaped and made her way back to Korea where her family disowned her because of the

shame that she had caused them. She married, to an abusive husband, and finally left that marriage and found happiness with another Korean man.

Also, I read an article about a woman in the former Yugoslavia who was caught up in the fighting there, and lost both her husband and son, and ended up in a refugee camp. There, she and other women were told about opportunities to become secretaries across the Adriatic in Bari, Italy where I have been years ago. When she arrived, she and the other women were forced into prostitution. Only when the Italian police raided the house where she was enslaved did she escape.

There are approximately 50,000 human slaves in the U.S., and more than a million worldwide. It is so tragic, yet little or nothing is being done about it, which is why this article is so important.

I brought the issue to the attention of someone who is very close to President Obama's two top campaign chiefs, and never heard back from him on the subject.

I include my comments here, not because they contain great wisdom, but because it is the easiest means of highlighting an issue of enormous importance. Every year we read about lots of cases here in the U.S., where children are kidnapped and never found again. Clearly, the case of Jaycee Lee Dugard, an 11-year-old girl who was kidnapped from South Lake Tahoe in 1991, and who was found alive recently, riveted national attention. She was kept as a sex slave^[2]; however, her story is not unique. There are lots of women like her in the United States and elsewhere in the world today. Men are victims as well, as Mike McGraw and Laura Bauer have discussed in their article.

Too often when we hear of such stories, we think that it could never touch our lives or the lives of our loved ones or friends. Tragically, that is what Jaycee Lee Dugard's family thought; and the same was true of the family of Elizabeth Smart whose kidnapping occurred on June 5, 2002, when she was abducted from her Salt Lake City, Utah bedroom at the age of 14. She was found nine months later, after having been held as a sex slave too.^[3]

While there are issues galore facing Americans today (e.g., the economy, national security, wars), human trafficking cannot be one that is shunted aside and forgotten. It is too important.

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^[1] Mr. Naegele was counsel to the U.S. Senate Banking Committee, and chief of staff to Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient and former U.S. Senator Edward W. Brooke (R-Mass), the first black senator since Reconstruction after the U.S. Civil War. He practices law in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles with his firm, Timothy D. Naegele & Associates (www.naegele.com). He has an undergraduate degree in economics from UCLA, as well as two law degrees from the School of Law (Boalt Hall), University of California, Berkeley, and from Georgetown University. He is a member of the District of Columbia and California bars. He served as a Captain in the U.S. Army, assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency at the Pentagon, where he received the Joint Service Commendation Medal. Mr. Naegele is an Independent politically; and he is listed in Who's Who in America, Who's Who in American Law, and Who's Who in Finance and Business. He has written extensively over the years. *See, e.g.,* www.naegele.com/whats_new.html#articles

[2] See, e.g., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kidnapping_of_Jaycee_Lee_Dugard

[3] See, e.g., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Smart

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