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Tim Echols to host human trafficking awareness tour in Savannah



By Courtney Cole (<http://wsav.com/author/wsavccole/>)

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Picture courtesy Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

<http://wsav.com/2016/08/12/tim-echols-to-host-human-trafficking-awareness-tour-in-savannah/>

SAVANNAH, Ga.

Human trafficking.

There are *millions* of victims and *billions* of dollars being made worldwide in the illegal industry. Some of the activity is happening right here in Georgia.

But there's a state Public Service Commissioner who wants your help to stop it.

News 3's Courtney Cole has the story.

"It is hard to believe, that someone would take your daughter or my daughter and keep her in a motel room and make her have sex with dozens of people every day and treat her like an animal. But there are people doing this."

And it's *those* people that Georgia Public Service Commissioner Tim Echols wants to find.

Every night, at least 100 juvenile girls in Georgia are exploited as a part of child sex-trafficking rings, according to The Center for Public Policy Studies.

Many of them are out of Atlanta, which has been deemed one of the *top* 14 cities in the United States for child prostitution by the FBI.

But the father of seven says, Savannah is being affected, too.

"These traffickers are bringing girls up and down I-95. They'll spend a couple of days in Savannah, they'll go over to Valdosta, they'll go to Atlanta...they're moving them around. They trade them like pawns, according to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation," Echols told News 3.

But as Operation Dark Night proved in 2014, traffickers *can* be stopped.

"Operation Dark Night, which was a sting by the U.S. Attorney's Office here in Savannah rescued 10 girls that were being kept in dog cages in a home," said Echols.

It also sent more than 20 people to jail.

But Echols doesn't want it to stop there.

That's why he's hosting a tour next month in Savannah to make sure law makers and law

enforcement get to see what's *really* going on...and find solutions.

"Maybe foster some sector-specific training: like medical personnel being trained with what to look for. Taxi drivers, limo drivers, hotel front desk personnel, people that might normally be in a place where a trafficker would be a girl through. If they've been trained to see this and can call the tip line and report it, it might trigger an investigation," Echols said.

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If you think you know someone who may be a victim of human trafficking, call The National Human Trafficking Resource Center: 1-888-373-7888

-or-

Visit their website: <https://traffickingresourcecenter.org/> (<https://traffickingresourcecenter.org/>)

To find out more about the human trafficking awareness tour happening next month, you can call: 404-656-4515

-or-

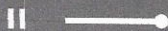
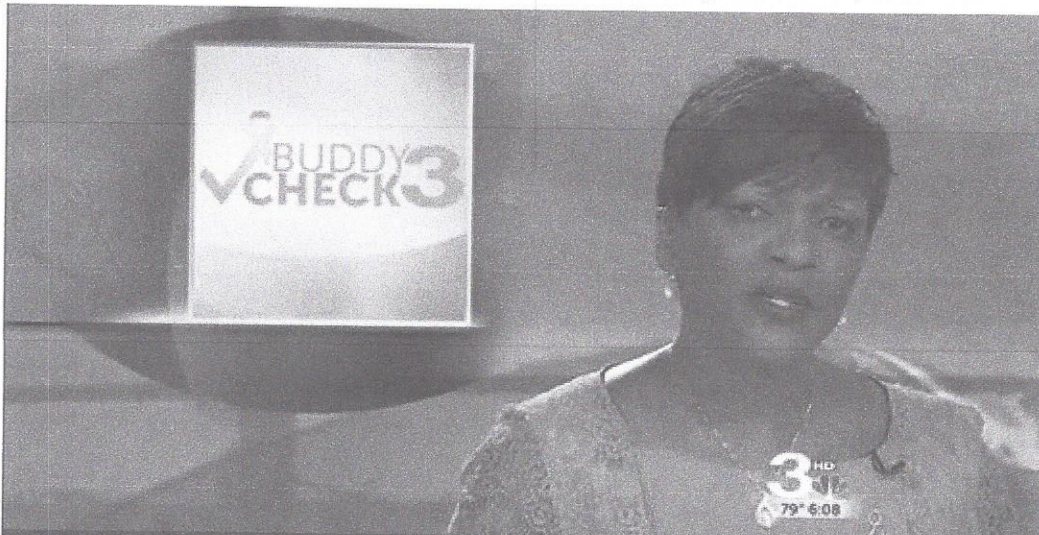
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