

Governor Charlie Crist came to Jacksonville Monday, Jan. 29, to announce his budget recommendations for the Anti-Murder Act, which will help reduce violent crimes and Internet child pornography by forcing judges to keep violent criminals in jail pending trial if they are accused of violating probation.

Choosing Jacksonville to make this announcement, he was joined by Mayor John Peyton, Sheriff John Rutherford, State Attorney Bill McCollum and many others. Sen. Paula Dockery, R-Lakeland, also present, will sponsor the legislation (SB146) again this year and have it ready when the Legislature opens March 6.

During a walk around the Northwest Jacksonville neighborhood, officials spoke with citizens concerned about crime in their community. Crist affirmed his confidence in the JSO: "There's always challenges in fighting crime...It's very difficult and nobody has more integrity...in doing it the right way than Sheriff Rutherford."



## Human Trafficking Awareness Press Conference



Arnold B. (Chip) Corsmeier, Esq., Asst. U.S. Attorney (and Chairman of the NE FL Human Trafficking Task Force (NFHTTF)), was moderator for the press conference held at the Main Library on January 22 to kick off Human Trafficking Awareness Week. Standing behind him, (l to r) Chief Mike Herrington, Duval County School Police; Nassau County Undersheriff Carl Woodle; Baker County Sheriff Joey Dobson; Clay County Sheriff Rick Beseler; Cynthia Rogers-Vallely, Bureau Chief, Division of Victim Services; and Maureen T. Horkan, Asst. Atty. Gen., Bureau Chief, Cyber Crime Unit, joined many other law enforcement personnel, elected officials and victim advocates who supported this event.

Sheriff John Rutherford said the JSO is committed to investigating these types of "modern day slavery" crimes. All officers and recruits will be trained to identify victims of HT and what to do if/when they locate them. These victims, fearing deportation, often will not seek out law enforcement, also because in most of the victims' home countries, the police are corrupt. He worried that victims would seek out protection from their traffickers with gangs like MS-13.

Mayor John Peyton signed a proclamation on Jan. 23, and the Jacksonville City Council passed a resolution on Jan. 9, naming Jan. 21-27 Human Trafficking Awareness Week. The purpose of this designated week was to increase public awareness about the fastest growing criminal industry in our country.

Paul Perez, U.S. Atty., Middle District of Florida, emphasized the importance of identifying and prosecuting traffickers, and FBI SAC Michael Folmar spoke of his agency's efforts to investigate and curtail this crime. Wendy Hallowell, Victims' Rights Coordinator for the Governor's Office, drove from Tallahassee to read a letter from Governor Crist who pledged his administration's support. City Councilwoman Glorious Johnson who, along with Councilwoman Mia Jones (also present at the press conference), spoke about her role in sponsoring the Council resolution recognizing the need to raise public awareness.

Elaine Carson, Director of World Relief, outlined the range of services identified victims may need for successful integration into the community, and trafficking victim Given Kachepea briefly spoke of his rescue several years ago in Texas.

Members of the NFHTTF, who made presentations and showed films throughout the week at local colleges, estimate around 600 persons gained new understanding of human trafficking - another step in the fight against this terrible crime against humanity.

(Editor's note: The HT Task Force extends its heartfelt gratitude to Mitesh R. Sangani, Conference Center Manager at the Main Library, for his and his staff's invaluable assistance in accommodating the press conference and workshop which followed.)

## I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- I CAN...**  educate myself about victim issues and the criminal justice system.
- I CAN...**  make telephone calls and write letters to elected officials (mayor, city council members, state and federal senators and representatives).
- I CAN...**  attend city council meetings and let my presence and opinion be known.
- I CAN...**  educate myself about political candidates and let my choice be known to friends and neighbors.
- I CAN...**  vote in every election; write letters to the newspaper expressing my views.
- I CAN...**  attend court hearings and show support for innocent victims of crime.
- I CAN...**  provide a ride for a victim of crime to court hearings or other business.
- I CAN...**  make a phone call to an innocent victim and let them know I care.
- I CAN...**  provide child care for victims when they go to court.
- I CAN...**  write cards and give words of encouragement to victims family.
- I CAN...**  cook a meal for an innocent victim's family.
- I CAN...**  make a financial or food donation to a victim's family.
- I CAN...**  set up a neighborhood watch in my area and be actively involved in it.
- I CAN...**  call police when I see something suspicious.
- I CAN...**  get to know the policemen assigned to my neighborhood.
- I CAN...**  contact my police department and schedule to ride with them as they patrol my community.
- I CAN...**  speak out against violence, let others know that violence is unacceptable and that murder deserves a just sentence. The secret word is affirm.
- I CAN...**  support my school system in its efforts to ensure safety for all children.
- I CAN...**  ask my church or civic organization to have a trained victim of crime committee to respond to the needs in my area.
- I CAN...**  volunteer at the Justice Coalition or Victim Services Center.
- I CAN...**  Get involved! Lend an ear and a helping hand.

And you can start today by checking each activity you would like to do as we begin to make a difference in our community.

Please complete the bottom (please print or type) and mail or fax to:

Justice Coalition, 1935 S. Lane Ave., #2, Jacksonville, FL 32210.

Phone: 904/783-6312

Fax: 904/783-4171

[www.justicecoalition.org](http://www.justicecoalition.org)

All contributions to the Justice Coalition are tax deductible and are greatly appreciated.

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