



**Human Trafficking: Preying on our Children**  
January 31, 2019

**Preying on our Children**

As we close out Human Trafficking Awareness Month, I wanted to share with you an op-ed I recently wrote for the Connection Newspapers that focuses on the heinous crime of Human Trafficking and what Fairfax County is doing to address it.

**Just Ask Youth Conference**

This Saturday, February 2, 2019, I will be attending Just Ask Prevention's Youth Cares Conference hosted by Director Bill Woolf, recipient of the 2018 Presidential Medal for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

**Other Events**

**Public Hearing - Proposed Sign Ordinance Regulations:**

- Fairfax County is proposing changes to the zoning ordinance regulating signs. The public hearing for this proposal is next week, Tuesday, February 5, 2019 at 4:00 pm.

**Decommissioning of Former Nuclear Power Plant at Fort Belvoir:**

- The Army has continued their efforts to decommission and dismantle a deactivated SM-1 former nuclear power plant at Fort Belvoir. The SM-1 nuclear power plant is located on the western shore of the Potomac River within the boundaries of Fort Belvoir.

## **Human Trafficking: Monstrosity in Our Backyard**

Human trafficking is a heinous crime and major issue in Northern Virginia. The victims are often children, teens, and young adults who are forced to have sex with as many as 30 customers a day while their trafficker profits. It's easy to think that this awful exploitation of our most vulnerable citizens wouldn't be prevalent in one of the richest regions in the country. But the truth is it's happening in our backyards, and the fight to end it starts with raising awareness to prevent it.

As a member of the Board of Supervisors, I'm proud to say that I've supported anti-human trafficking legislation for many years, including nationally recognized bipartisan legislation put forward by former Congresswoman Barbara Comstock. I continue to support the efforts of Fairfax County law enforcement, nonprofits, faith groups, and schools in the fight to end human trafficking, but there's still so much to be done.

Since 2013 Northern Virginia has seen over 500 cases of human trafficking, in addition to a significant spike in calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline within the last two years. Human trafficking is the second fastest growing crime sector nationally, and is projected to surpass the drug trade as the first.

Prevention of this heinous crime starts with awareness, which is why I support January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

For that reason, I recently awarded a proclamation to Bill Woolf, executive director of Just Ask Prevention, declaring January 2019 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Just Ask Prevention is a leading nonprofit I've worked closely with, as their goal is to make sure that young people and parents are able to protect themselves and their children from becoming victims of trafficking.

Over the last few years, we've worked together to support the implementation of human trafficking curriculum in Fairfax County Public Schools. This curriculum teaches students to recognize the recruiting and manipulation tactics of traffickers. As some survivor videos note in the curriculum, often times these tactics are subtle, not the "snatch-and-grab" tactic you would expect. Traffickers are becoming increasingly savvy in trapping their victims, even using social media to identify teens who are likely targets and grooming them through flattery.

As a father of two, I see raising awareness of human trafficking as critical for securing the safety of our children. While I have supported many grants to provide funding for our police to combat trafficking, awareness can protect our children before they fall prey to the horrors of this monstrous crime. With trafficking cases involving all 26 high

schools in Fairfax County, we cannot fall into the mindset that it could never happen to us, never to our kid.

I've listened to heartbreaking stories of parents who never believed something as awful as sex trafficking would happen to their daughter or son, until the police found their child assaulted and drugged in a hotel room. No child and no family should ever have to go through that pain. Those parents have impressed upon me the importance of listening to our kids and asking them questions about the people they meet and interact with before they are manipulated into believing there is no way out. But it's not enough to just watch out for our own kid. As a community, we need to look out for other people's kids as well by taking notice of the kids on our daughter's soccer team, at our son's bus stop, and at the fast food place on the corner. Together we can ensure that our community is inhospitable to all forms of human trafficking and that no kid goes unnoticed and unprotected.

If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking, contact the National Sex Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733 for help. If you are in immediate danger, call 911. For more information about protecting yourself and others from human trafficking, visit <http://www.justaskprevention.org>.

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### **Just Ask Youth Cares Conference**

This Saturday, February 2nd I will be attending Just Ask Prevention's Youth Cares Conference hosted by Director Bill Woolf, recipient of the 2018 Presidential Medal for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

The Youth Cares Conference is an educational conference on human trafficking for high school students, parents, and interest community members in the D.C. area. To learn more about what you can do to raise awareness of human trafficking, I encourage you to visit their website at

<http://www.justaskprevention.org>

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### **Decommissioning of Former Nuclear Power Plant at Fort Belvoir**

Our office has recently been made aware of the Army's ongoing efforts to decommission and dismantle a deactivated SM-1 former nuclear power plant at Fort Belvoir. The SM-1 nuclear power plant is located on the western shore of the Potomac River within the boundaries of Fort Belvoir.

The SM-1 plant operated from 1957 to 1973 for training the multi-service crews that would operate various plants in the program. The plant was deactivated in 1974. Since then, the Army has provided on-going surveillance of the decommissioned facility. This consisted of removal of the nuclear fuel, minor decontamination, shipment of necessary radioactive waste, sealing the pressure vessel, and installing and monitoring devices. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has been designated to carry the SM-1 decommissioning and dismantlement of the deactivated SM-1 plant.

Complete information on the USACE dismantlement plans for the SM-1 plant and off-post informational meetings for the public can be found here:

<https://www.nab.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/SM-1/>

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### **Proposed Sign Ordinance Regulations**

Fairfax County is proposing changes to the zoning ordinance regulating signs. The proposed amendment is phase one of a two-part effort and focuses on rewriting existing regulations in a "content neutral" manner to comply with recent court decisions, designate the maximum size of signs, reorganizing regulations into a more user-friendly format and establishing more uniform regulation of signs in all zoning districts.

The public hearing for this proposal is next week Tuesday, February 5, at 4:00 pm.

The staff report can be located here:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-zoning/sites/planning-zoning/files/assets/documents/zmod/signs.pdf>