

From: Danny Varat <DannyVarat@scstatehouse.gov>
To: kmoorehead@scag.govkmoorehead@scag.gov
Date: 6/20/2018 10:41:37 AM
Subject: Fw: Human Trafficking in Small Towns

Katherine, hi. We received this email in the Lt. Governor's office, and I think it's something y'all can handle better than us. Please let me know if this is appropriate for the AG or if I should send it elsewhere. Thanks a lot

Danny

From: Sarah Shetley [mailto:seshetley@presby.edu]
Sent: Sunday, May 27, 2018 11:36 PM
To: Lt. Governor's Office
Subject: Human Trafficking in Small Towns

Dear Lieutenant Governor Kevin Bryant,

I am writing to you out of concern as a South Carolina citizen. In our state Charleston and Greenville are largely the two locations where much focus is placed on preventing human trafficking, and rightfully so. However, I'm afraid this danger is beginning to seep out effecting many if not all counties in our state. Many women have shared with me their own personal stories of being followed in stores, watched, and how they thought to seek help. But I know there are many others, whose stories don't get told because they weren't lucky enough to find help in time. Today I heard the most alarming story out of all of them. Not because of the nature of the case, because it was much like the others we have heard about around the state. A woman went into Walmart, a man started following her at the entrance and by the time she existed the store two more men had joined the original and they were all three waiting outside the store for her. Luckily this woman noticed she was being followed and got an employee to walk her outside. While it's an alarming story, it's sadly becoming a common story. The reason I find this so alarming is because this didn't occur in Greenville or Charleston or even Columbia, it wasn't a big area. Instead, it occurred in Union County where the towns population is only 8,000. This Walmart serves as an outlet to buy groceries, household supplies, and whatever else you may need because it's one of the few stores left in the town as a whole, the only Walmart at that, and it's not even safe for people to take their families to now.

I am aware that Governor McMaster claimed January as National human trafficking and slavery awareness month, and of his campaign that placed several billboards in the lower part of the state bringing awareness to this danger. However, I am here to say that this is not enough! In some way we need to take action, focusing on both closing cases reported of human trafficking as well as raising awareness. Awareness is important, but it is more important to focus on new and innovative ways to keep people safe, so that South Carolinians do not have to live in fear. Truthfully, we are experiencing a national crisis with human trafficking that is quite frankly being pushed under the rug and ignored. The national conversation on this topic is well below what it should be. Maybe we can't change the nation, but what we can start with is our state, and making it a safe place to be and setting the standard for how this issue should be handled. I don't expect our legislation to have all the answers, but sparking the conversation and becoming more proactive is key to putting a stop to human trafficking. For those vulnerable, women and children everywhere let's be a state that they can count on.

Best regards,

Sarah Shetley

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Sarah Shetley
Presbyterian College '19