

Survey: Top 10 Insights on How Americans View Sex Trafficking

Selah Freedom and Opinium share results of new survey culling Americans' knowledge of Sex Trafficking in the U.S.

SARASOTA, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, January 26, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Human trafficking continues to be a significant crisis in the United States. Every year, millions of boys, girls, and young adults are sexually exploited. It can happen to any demographic, gender, race or nationality. But how well do Americans understand the severity of this crime, which is on the list of the FBI's top priorities?

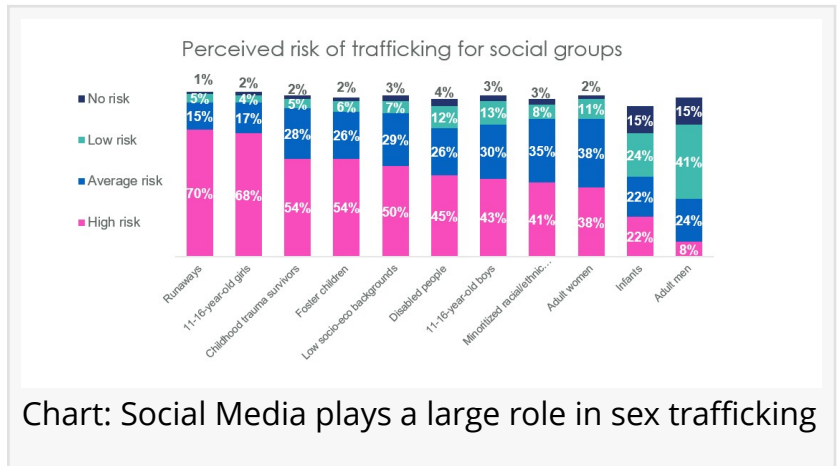
In light of January's Human Trafficking Prevention Month, [Selah Freedom](#) (an anti-sex trafficking organization based in Florida) teamed with [Opinium](#) (an award-winning strategic insight agency) to survey "Americans' Understanding of Sex Trafficking." The results show new, insightful data:

1. Nearly half of American adults rank sex trafficking as one of their top three crime concerns
When asked to choose the top three crimes they think are most problematic in the U.S., nearly half (46%) of Americans selected sex trafficking. Only drug trafficking (51%) and gun crime (59%) saw more selections.

2. Younger Americans are more concerned with sex trafficking than older Americans
55% of Gen Z and Millennials ranked it as one of their top 3 concerns, compared to 45% of Gen X, 38% of Baby Boomers, and 33% of the Silent Generation

3. Americans are split on their self-reported knowledge of sex trafficking

51% say they have some or a lot of knowledge about this issue and 46% say they have very little or no knowledge. Millennials report more knowledge than other generations – 62% said they have some or a lot of knowledge about sex trafficking



4. When asked where in the U.S. they thought that sex trafficking was most prevalent, Americans did not have a clear consensus as to where in America sex trafficking is most pervasive.

Over a quarter of respondents chose the South Atlantic, Northeast-Mid Atlantic and West South Central regions, and a quarter chose the West Coast. California leads the U.S. in sex trafficking, followed by Texas and Florida. (Note: human trafficking cases have been reported in all 50 states.)

5. One in five believe there is a high risk of sex trafficking in their area

A fifth (20%) of American adults think there is a high risk of sex trafficking in their city or town, and an additional third (32%) think there is a medium risk.

6. Seven in ten respondents said they think young girls aged 11-16 and/or runaways are at higher-than-average risk of trafficking (Note: At Selah Freedom, victims report the average of being lured into sex trafficking is 12-14 years old).

7. Households making over \$100,000 a year are more likely to think that people from low socioeconomic backgrounds are at a higher-than-average risk than households that earn less money.

8. Traditional news media is the most popular source of information about trafficking.

Three-fifths (59%) of Americans say that the news has been a source of their knowledge of trafficking. Half (49%) also get information from television, and over two-fifths (44%) get it from media sources. In addition, two-fifths (39%) say that social media is a source of their knowledge. This number jumps to 59% for Gen Z and 52% for Millennials and is lower for older generations.

Interestingly, people who report having knowledge about trafficking are much more likely to use social media as an information source than those who report little to no knowledge.

9. Americans hold the FBI, federal and state courts, and federal policymakers most responsible for addressing trafficking.

10. On average, Americans think that children should learn about trafficking and abuse prevention starting at age 9.

Three-quarters (72%) of Americans believe that children should begin learning safety strategies to prevent sexual abuse and sex trafficking before their teenage years, with the average response being 9.1 years old.

Of the 72% of Americans who believe children should be taught about sex trafficking, four in five (77%) believe children should be taught “who to contact” if they suspect sex trafficking. Seven in ten (72%) Americans who think kids should learn about trafficking believe parents/ family members should be responsible for teaching children about these issues. About half (53%) believe these issues should be taught in school classes that parents can opt children out of, whereas four in ten (41%) think they should be taught in mandatory classes.

In addition to the 10 key points highlighted above, the survey indicated a vast majority of Americans - (including Gen Z and Millennials) - agree trafficking can happen anywhere in the U.S.:

- Almost nine in ten (87%) Americans believe that sex trafficking can occur anywhere.
- Four-fifths (80%) of Americans believe that it is not easy for a woman to leave her trafficker.
- (74%) believe that female victims do not enter sex trafficking by choice. Younger Americans are more likely to think that it is easy for women to leave their traffickers: 15% of Gen Z and 14% of Millennials said that this was true.
- Younger respondents are also more likely to think that women and girls enter sex trafficking by choice: 21% of Gen Z and 20% of Millennials believe this is true.

A key insight the survey shows is (among other things) more education is needed to help the younger generation learn that sex trafficking is not by choice, but involves tactics using fraud, force, or coercion, and it's very difficult to leave their trafficker. Also, education should begin early in school and the use of social media plays a key role in both obtaining information about sex trafficking and luring kids into the trade.

About Selah Freedom

Selah Freedom is a nonprofit organization with the mission to end sex trafficking and bring freedom to the exploited through five strong programs: Awareness, Prevention, Outreach, Residential, and Selah Consulting.

About Opinium

Opinium is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on the pulse of what people think, feel and do. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter.

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