



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

## Grisanti And Gallivan Co-Sponsor Human Trafficking Roundtable

MARK GRISANTI August 7, 2013

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**Senator Mark Grisanti (R, I-60)** is pleased to announce today he will be co-sponsoring a roundtable with Senator Patrick Gallivan (R, C, I-59) aimed addressing human trafficking. Human Trafficking is a concern for WNY as the region is located on the border with Canada. The senators are hoping to stimulate conversation in order to prevent, suppress and bring awareness to the issue of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. The roundtable will be held on Wednesday August 7th from 12:00 to 1:00 pm at the Walter J. Mahoney Building in downtown Buffalo, Senate Hearing Room 6.

Human trafficking is a term that refers to the illegal trade and transportation of citizens and non-citizens for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor. Contrary to popular belief according to the FBI not all human trafficking victims are foreign born. There have been many cases where young teen runaways and other vulnerable citizens have been manipulated and trafficked by other Americans for the purpose of profit.

In order to be guilty of human trafficking a citizen can participate in the recruitment, transportation, transferring, harboring and or receiving of people by the ways or means of threat, coercion, abduction, fraud, deceit and deception of power for the goals of violent or sexual exploitation, forced labor, involuntary servitude, debt bondage and slavery.

Law enforcement officials in Western New York have indicated they have seen girls as young as 16 and as old as 60 brought in on prostitution charges as a result of human trafficking. In keeping with the principles of the Safe Harbor Act, the senators are interested in the available support and services that are offered to victims in breaking free from their abusers. Victims of human trafficking are found in nearly every industry. Including agriculture, domestic servitude, hospitality (hotels, casinos, bars), restaurants, factories, construction, and sex work.

Human trafficking has been estimated to generate \$9.2 billion a year. Local Non-profits dedicated to resolving the issues have identified 16 different countries of origin for victims of human trafficking including Mexico, China, Thailand, Kenya and Peru. Human trafficking also occurs prevalently among disenfranchised communities. Citizens, who are homeless, have been abused in the past and or economically disadvantaged fall prey to human traffickers.

The senators are interested in spreading awareness about human trafficking so that citizens may be aware of what human trafficking looks like. Awareness is the first step in prevention and the senators are seeking to educate parents as well about how and why human trafficking happens to teens.

Technology can be used to recruit children with first contact predominately being made on social media websites. Protecting the interests of WNY children is of the utmost importance to both Senator Grisanti and Senator Gallivan. The panel will be the first step in a process to call for increased advocacy on this issue and spread regional awareness about the cause of fighting human slavery.

**Senator Mark Grisanti said:**

"While human trafficking is prevalent across the United States the first step to combating this issue is raise awareness within the community. I am proud to be a part of the effort to educate the Western New York community on the dangers of human trafficking. We must protect our children and arm their parents with the information necessary to identify possible threats.

I am dedicated to supporting the most tangible activities that may increase our communities capacity to address the issue of human trafficking that is also why I voted in favor of Senator Gallivan's bill in the Senate(S. 2511) to further protect trafficked children and other victims, and punish the criminals who are responsible for sexual exploitation. Unfortunately, no action was taken in the Assembly."

**Senator Pat Gallivan said:**

"While we in Western New York would like to imagine ourselves largely insulated from the scourge of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, the facts paint a sadly different picture. This is an international crisis that is impacting millions of women and children in every corner of the globe. As a symbol of freedom and opportunity throughout the world, New York State is obligated to step up to do its part to defend the most fundamental human right - personal autonomy."