

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery and is being used all around the globe to benefit people who don't care at all about how they treat or use other people. Human trafficking is so coerced and frequently indistinguishable that the same people you see working at the grocery store or taking the bus with you may be victims of human trafficking. There is one thing about human trafficking that I believe needs to change, and that is the attention that is brought to the different types of human trafficking that exist. Generally, when human trafficking is mentioned or talked about, even in the human trafficking-related meetings that I have overheard my mom being in, people only ever talk about sex trafficking or use sex trafficking as the general term for human trafficking. Most people if asked about human trafficking wouldn't even know that labor trafficking exists, and that is due to the lack of attention and education that is brought to labor trafficking.

Labor trafficking is trafficking that involves forced labor, similar to slavery in the 1800s. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act also known as TVPA defines labor trafficking as: "The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery." Labor trafficking historically has been hard to identify and pin down because of how covert and clandestine the act of labor trafficking is. According to the National Institute of Justice, labor trafficking often is very concentrated and is related to many occupations that require hard, physical labor or are just risky in general. Some groups that are at higher risk for labor trafficking according to the National Institute of Justice are: "People of lower socio-economic backgrounds and levels of education, those with cognitive disabilities, youths who have run away, and those who suffer from drug addiction and homelessness." Along with the groups who are at most risk for labor trafficking many survivors of labor trafficking have many shared experiences with the many forms of human trafficking there are, such as deceptions and lies, intimidation, threat or fear, restrictions of freedom, and multiple more. With how hidden and stealthy labor trafficking is, I believe that more attention should be given to it.

It's estimated that millions of people are trafficked worldwide and the countless people who are being labor trafficked do not get the attention they deserve. Human trafficking in

general is very hard to discover, so with how hard it is to find people who are being labor trafficked, there are thousands of people being labor trafficked and no attention being brought to them to help them get out of that dangerous and very traumatic situation. After asking my mother, a former member of the U.S Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, first appointed by President Obama in 2015, then reappointed by President Trump in 2018 to serve her last term why more attention should be brought to labor trafficking I learned that victims and survivors of labor trafficking experience the same trauma that a sex trafficking victim or survivor has. Labor trafficking can also have health effects, not only affecting the victim or survivor but the people around them, my mom even said that these health issues greatly affect a pregnant woman which can lead to a miscarriage or stillborn. To be specific to Minnesota, labor trafficking has been found in many different industries and according to the statistics of the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs Minnesota Statistical Analysis Center, trafficking has been identified in 6 of the 7 regions of Minnesota, the most common region being the Twin Cities. Not only that, but the Minnesota Department of Health does not spend a single dollar on labor trafficking at all, but they do spend millions of dollars on sex trafficking. The only people in Minnesota actively helping stop and prevent labor trafficking is the federal government. For all these reasons It's almost impossible to refuse to give more attention to labor trafficking.

The most common argument against giving labor trafficking more attention is the rate at which it is identified or happens. A study that was funded by the NIJ found that the majority of identified cases of trafficking are sex trafficking cases and that only 11 percent of the cases were labor trafficking cases. It is also helpful to note that Federal and state data indicate that more investigations take place for sex trafficking compared to labor trafficking, meaning that less work is being done for labor trafficking. When you put labor trafficking in the perspective of sex trafficking it is true that it happens less, but if something happens less does that mean that little to no attention should be given to it? Even with the smaller percentages of labor trafficking cases, there are still thousands of people in a labor trafficking position. For example, the "U.S. Department of State estimates that 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year" and this doesn't even include the innumerable amount of people who are being labor trafficked in the U.S. Along with that, the lack of funding given to labor trafficking

means that labor trafficking is happening and being unnoticed because there is a scant amount of people who are trying to help.

Human trafficking has unfortunately plagued the world and is a violation of human rights that is benefitting the traffickers and making the lives of those who they traffic traumatic and forever affected. People all over the world are being trafficked, specifically, labor trafficked, and they, unfortunately, are not getting the attention that they need and rightfully deserve. People generalize human trafficking thinking that it only includes sex trafficking when it does not, people forget or just do not have the knowledge about the labor trafficking that goes on inside and outside of the U.S. Having knowledge and understanding that labor trafficking exists not only helps the victims and survivors of labor trafficking but helps people in the future to have more knowledge about labor trafficking and how to even identify it more. If more attention gets brought to labor trafficking more people will be saved from their traffickers and fewer people will be ignored. Taking all of this into account, we all need to help prevent human trafficking from happening no matter what form it is so that no person is left disregarded and trafficking ends.