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**DA VANCE SPEAKS AT “INVESTIGATING AND PROSECUTING SEX  
TRAFFICKING” SYMPOSIUM AT JOHN JAY COLLEGE**

Good Morning and thank you for your kind welcome.

I'm pleased to be here this morning to join President Travis in welcoming you to our Second Crime Summit.

I want to thank our hosts at John Jay and President Travis for inviting us here to talk about an issue of critical importance to all of us.

Sex trafficking takes a devastating human toll on its victims, and its perpetrators prey upon some of the most vulnerable members of society. Trafficked women, men and children are often physically abused, psychologically intimidated, and fearful of reporting their abuse to authorities. Although not physically constrained, they are held hostage by those who control them, unable to break free from their traffickers.

This was clear in a recent case brought by my Office's Human Trafficking Program. A few months ago, we dismantled a sex trafficking operation run by a father and son. As is typical in these types of cases, the victims were forced to turn over all the money they made each night directly to the defendants. The women had no control over their finances, making them essentially helpless if they tried to leave the operation.

The traffickers also psychologically manipulated and physically abused these victims. The women were branded with tattoos depicting their traffickers' street names, and at least one of the women was also tattooed with a bar code. That's right – like a carton of milk, she was branded to remind her every day that she was property, and not a human being. The women lived under the constant threat of violence for violating any of the traffickers' rules, such as being late or not bringing in enough money.

What sets this case apart from others is that our prosecution involves a top-to-bottom dismantling of the sex trafficking operation — we charged the traffickers at the very top of the organization, the drivers who drummed up business for them, as well as the “johns” themselves. Essentially, we attacked the supply, the delivery and the demand. If not for the demand side, trafficking would cease to exist, and there would be no market this type of

activity without the johns. We are also not charging the trafficked women, as they are victims, not criminals.

We know that the only way to fight sex trafficking is to join with our partners in law enforcement, service providers, advocates, and academics, so that we can bring this problem into the light and obtain justice for victims. What we need is a collaborative approach.

That's why I am so heartened by the audience I see here today. In this room are representatives from police departments, district attorney's offices, social service providers, and advocacy groups. You are the dedicated people that, working together, will identify the victims, get them the help and support they so desperately need, and bring their traffickers to justice.

It was in this spirit that I created the Human Trafficking Program in the DA's Office to investigate and prosecute sex trafficking and labor trafficking cases. The Program is headed by Assistant District Attorney John Temple, whom you will hear from today. In addition to prosecuting sex trafficking and labor trafficking cases, the Program's goals are to provide greater support for victims and their families, and to educate law enforcement and the public about trafficking.

These cases are not simple, and the Human Trafficking Program employs all of the Office's resources to mine data, utilize electronic surveillance, seize assets, utilize online sources of evidence, and work with outside partners. And it draws on the expertise of all areas of the Office, including Witness Aid Services, and the Cybercrime, Major Economic Crime, and Asset Forfeiture bureaus.

Through the work of the Human Trafficking Program, we are able to initiate investigations, develop leads, and identify cases that may involve elements of trafficking from thousands of street arrests that come in through other areas of the Office. This enables us to initiate investigations all without placing the burden on the victim to come forward.

We greatly appreciate the collaboration and support we receive from our partners in the law enforcement and advocate communities. I thank you all for being here today and showing your commitment to fighting sex trafficking.

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