

Ohio Investigative Unit



MEDIA RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 10, 2017

Contact: OIU Agent-in-Charge Michelle Thourot
(614) 644-2415 or (614) 752-2792

Agents seek public's assistance spotting human trafficking

(COLUMBUS) – Human trafficking takes place in communities throughout Ohio, and it's often discovered in liquor permit premises like convenience stores, bars and truck stops.

Through programs such as Alcohol Server Knowledge (ASK), agents with the Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) work with liquor permit premises to identify signs of human trafficking. Agents are turning to the public to teach the signs of human trafficking and ways to report possible incidents.

"Whether you're a bartender, a customer or just stopping to fill up your car - we need the public to step up and say something." said Captain Gary Allen, commander of OIU. "Time is usually not on our side, the sooner we find out about these possible incidents, the more likely we can make an impact."

Signs to look for include:

- A man or woman controlling a person's movements.
- Someone not allowed to speak for themselves.
- They are not properly dressed for their age or weather.
- He or she appears very young as well as fearful or overly submissive.

Things to know when reporting:

- Supply details of the situation that led you to believe human trafficking was happening.
- Explain what made you think their actions were forced or coerced.
- Try to supply any names, addresses, phone number, license plate, demographics and physical description of controller and/or victim.
- Any small detail can help!

If you would like to request a free ASK program contact OIU at (614) 644-2415. To report signs of human trafficking, contact law enforcement immediately at 911 or #677.

###

The Ohio State Highway Patrol's Ohio Investigative Unit agents are plain-clothed fully sworn peace officers. OIU is charged with enforcing the state's liquor laws and is the only state law enforcement agency specifically tasked with investigating food stamp fraud crimes. Agents also investigate tobacco violations. Follow OIU on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ohio-Investigative-Unit/165782203506269> and on Twitter by logging onto http://twitter.com/Ohio_OIU.