

President W. Kent Fuchs



University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611

Dear President Fuchs

According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, [Florida ranks third in the U.S. for human trafficking](#). Specifically, experts estimate that there are hundreds of victims trapped in sex trafficking in Gainesville, with the industry spanning all neighborhoods and economic classes. Created Gainesville, a local organization that seeks to end sexual exploitation, has assisted over 1,100 women since 2017 in the North Central Florida region, truly highlighting the severity of the issue within the community. As a preeminent component of the Gainesville area, we believe that the University of Florida inherently bears some responsibility in assisting to ameliorate the issue. Therefore, we urge you to consider the following proposals.

In response to this acute situation, the Florida Legislature created the [Florida Task Force on Human Trafficking](#) "...for the express purpose of examining the problem of human trafficking and recommending strategies and actions for reducing or eliminating the unlawful trafficking of men, women, and children into this state." Other universities, such as Florida State University, have already implemented key aspects from these recommendations. Actions include the mandated posting of human trafficking support groups and hotline information in buildings, as well as public restrooms. Hence, we urge the University of Florida to follow suit and work with the Florida Task Force on Human Trafficking.

It is also crucial to invest in informing our youth, as [exposure to human trafficking chiefly occurs between the ages of 13 and 17. Furthermore, early exposure increases vulnerability to trafficking later in life](#). As an institute of great capacity and extensive connections to local schools, UF has a duty to take action against trafficking. Ensuring the safety of current and prospective UF students should be the utmost priority of the University. In preventative measures, UF should send teams to local high schools in order to hold comprehensive and engaging information sessions upon human trafficking. They would include, but are not limited to, educating upon different forms of trafficking, the factors of vulnerability, and ways to report it. Through these sessions, young students would become aware and vigilant of the situation plaguing the community. They would be prepared and mobilized as active agents against trafficking. This would carry significant implications as they proceed in their studies to UF, or other universities, with the potential to significantly decrease trafficking rates in the long-term.

Yours sincerely,

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