

Ladies and gentlemen of the Senate, thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Frederick Woodard and I serve as the Director of Investigations for the Asservo Project, a non-profit organization committed to combating human trafficking. I am a retired Pittsburgh police detective serving 20 years with the bureau, 15 of which as a narcotics detective and the majority of that time as a Task Force Officer with the DEA investigating large-scale drug trafficking organizations.

Firstly, we're here to discuss the significance of public, government and private partnerships. Human trafficking is a pervasive issue that transcends jurisdictional boundaries, and to effectively combat it, collaboration is paramount. The Asservo Project firmly believes in fostering partnerships between law enforcement agencies, government bodies, and private organizations. By pooling resources, expertise, and information, we can create a unified front against this heinous crime.

In regards to the use of AI in investigations: In an era dominated by technological advancements, AI is a powerful tool that can revolutionize our approach to combating human trafficking. The Asservo Project is working toward leveraging cutting-edge AI algorithms to analyze vast amounts of data, identify patterns, and detect potential trafficking activities. This will not only accelerate investigations but also will allow us to uncover hidden connections that may otherwise elude traditional investigative methods. As an example, our cyber team currently utilizes cutting-edge facial recognition technology to assist us in identifying and locating victims as well as their traffickers. Integrating AI into our efforts enhances our ability to stay one step ahead of traffickers, ultimately leading to more successful prosecutions and the rescue of victims.

Finally, I want to emphasize the importance of outreach and awareness in our collective fight against human trafficking. Education is a potent weapon, and the Asservo Project is dedicated to raising public awareness about the signs of trafficking, prevention strategies, and available support services. Through our community outreach program, educational initiatives, and partnerships with local organizations, we aim to empower individuals with the knowledge to recognize and report suspicious activities. By mobilizing communities and fostering a culture of vigilance, we create a formidable barrier against traffickers who rely on shadows and silence to perpetrate their crimes.

In conclusion, the Asservo Project stands ready to work hand-in-hand with the Pennsylvania State Senate, law enforcement agencies, and fellow non-profit organizations to eradicate human trafficking from our communities. Through robust partnerships, the integration of AI in investigations, and widespread outreach efforts, we can collectively build a safer, more secure future for all Pennsylvanians. Together, let us send a resounding message that human trafficking has no place in our great commonwealth. Thank you.