

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN ONTARIO



[Human sex trafficking](#) is a hidden epidemic happening in plain sight and its frequency is growing. Amongst all of Canada, Ontario represents the largest proportion of people trafficked for sex. The vast majority are women and girls, [64% of trafficked victims are 24 years of age or younger](#), and the average age overall is 17. Indigenous girls and women make up a disproportionately high percentage.

What are the issues?

[Human sex trafficking](#), its abuses and exploitations are increasing. “It’s not something that we can arrest our way out of,” says [RCMP Cpl. David Lane](#), of Nova Scotia Human Trafficking Unit. “The best human trafficking case is the one that doesn’t happen.”

The hallmarks of victim profiles reinforce the need to educate educators, parents and youth early and continuously regarding the forms of manipulation and coercion used by traffickers, what healthy relationships look like, as well as detection of vulnerable youths and early trafficked youths. For those who have been trafficked, appropriate, well-funded support services need to be in place.

Why now?

March 2020, the Ontario government announced the development of a five year, multi departmental anti-trafficking strategy and promised an investment of \$307 million. May of 2021, Bill 251, Ontario’s [Combating Human Trafficking Act](#) was carried into legislation. The Bill is thought to [rely too heavily on law enforcement](#), has others concerned about the [violation several human rights](#) and [the fear of pushing them underground](#). In the Fall of 2021, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) announced details about the Provincial Human Trafficking Intelligence-led Joint Forces Strategy (IJFS) which can investigate and disrupt multi-jurisdictional human trafficking organizations operating in the province.

As part of a multi departmental anti-trafficking strategy, the Ontario government has adopted policy aimed at educator and child/youth education through the Anti-Sex Trafficking Policy ([Program/Policy Memorandum 166, July 2021](#)). As of January 31, 2022, all provincially funded school boards, school authorities and provincial and demonstration schools in Ontario must have anti-sex trafficking protocols in place.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING Key Message

Sex trafficked persons are denied autonomy and dignity, suffer severe emotional and physical abuse and whose lives are at risk. Survivors of trafficking face the consequences of mental and physical trauma, are often ostracised, and often lack independent living skills. Human and societal costs are huge.

Questions for Candidates

1. Ontario has a *Combating Human Trafficking Act* strategy (Bill 251). To what extent will your government expand and improve this plan? What issues will your government tackle? How do you see your government moving forward to reduce this heinous crime?
2. Ontario has introduced new policy for schools and administrators regarding education on trafficking (Program/Policy Memorandum 166). How will your government ensure this policy is being followed and is effective?
3. The 401 corridor and is known for its trafficking opportunities. What does your government plan to do to reduce trafficking along this route?
4. How will your government make it easier for victims to come forward? How will your government strengthen conviction rates for perpetrators of trafficking?

Intersectional (linked) issues which may have priority in your riding/municipality include GBV: Social Services for Victims, Drug Public Health Emergency (Opioid Crisis), Mental Health, Safe Houses for Victims