

- EDITORIAL -

# Modern-day slavery exists all around us

They call it human trafficking, but let's call it what it is: modern-day slavery.

And it's taking place in Niagara right now. Girls and young women, snared by predatory pimps, are being forced into sexual slavery for the profit of those controlling them.

Now 15 local agencies in Niagara, that in one way or another play a role in either combating this scourge or dealing with the fallout from it, have joined forces in a new protocol to deal with human trafficking emergency response in the region.

With a more co-ordinated approach, the YWCA and numerous other partners such as the Niagara Sexual Assault Centre and Victim Services Niagara hope they'll better able to help victims who have escaped trafficking or are hoping to navigate what can be a complex web of services, and to broaden efforts to identify possible victims of trafficking.

Working together, the agencies including the OPP and Niagara Regional Police and some fire departments also hope to promote awareness of this terrible crime. The reality is that most Niagara residents hear "human trafficking" and it probably conjures up images of people in troubled nations far away, not in our backyard.

But officials say girls as young as 13 are being used as slaves, often moved from city to city and sold by their pimps to men for sex.

The pimps are frighteningly good at romancing their vulnerable recruits at first, then turning on them with techniques such as physical violence and threatening to put intimate photos of them on the internet or threatening their families.

There are even online guides that teach pimps how to become traffickers.

Digital technology has allowed trafficking to flourish, with the selling of girls online.

Toronto police said in February that they're now seeing a growing trend involving people using Airbnb rentals to conduct their illicit transactions.

Just how prevalent trafficking is is difficult to pinpoint exactly because most victims are unable or unwilling to report it to police due to their isolation, a deluded belief their keeper cares for them, or out of fear of violence from their trafficker.

But it is happening in motel and hotel rooms in Niagara.

The new protocol is one step in the right direction toward combating a crime that can leave young victims shattered with what can be lifelong psychological damage.



## ABOUT US



The Georgetown Independent & Free Press, published every Thursday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 80 community publications across Ontario.



The Independent & Free Press is a member of the National NewsMedia Council. Complainants are urged to bring their concerns to the attention of the newspaper and, if not satisfied, write The National NewsMedia Council, Suite 200, 890 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4W 2H2. Phone: 416-340-1981 Web: www.mediacouncil.ca



newsroom@theifp.ca  
IndependentAndFreePress  
@IFP\_11

## - LETTERS &amp; COMMENTARY -

## Pollsters reveal their anti-gun bias

On March 9, the day after Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale's National Guns and Gangs Summit, anti-gun lobby group PolySeSouvient released "proof" 63 per cent of Canadian gun owners support banning semi-automatic firearms.

In reality, anti-gun polling firm Environics delivered the lie their client paid for: "a majority of firearm owners" support banning guns.

The Environics survey shows only 159 of 1,510 total poll respondents own firearms.

Of those 159 self-identified gun owners, 131 supported a gun ban (33 "somewhat agree", 98 "strongly agree").

## ● GET CONNECTED

Have a comment on this or any other community issues? Email us at [newsroom@theifp.ca](mailto:newsroom@theifp.ca)

On March 9 and 10, the CSSA polled our membership, subscribers to our weekly Canadian Sports Shooting Association (CSSA) E-News and firearm owners on Facebook. We asked a simple, Yes or No question.

Do you support a ban on semi-automatic firearms?

Our results shine the light of truth on the lie perpetrated by Environics and proved, once again, the so-called polling firm's bias against lawful firearms owners.

\* 98 per cent of respondents oppose banning semi-automatic firearms.

\* 5.6 per cent of respondents said they were not firearm owners, yet the

majority of these still oppose the ban.

The ocean of discrepancy between the CSSA poll and the nonsense put forth by Environics is easy to explain.

Environics took a miniscule number, just 131 of 1,510 total respondents, and claimed those 131 people represent the views of 2.1 million licensed Canadian gun owners. Misleading doesn't begin to describe the factual fallacy they attempted to foist upon Canadians.

The CSSA, on the other hand, polled real gun owners to find out the real answer to a simple, yes or no question.

Do you support a ban on

semi-automatic firearms?

It's no surprise real firearms owners almost unanimously (98 per cent) oppose banning semi-automatic firearms.

Real firearms owners know banning firearms from lawful, trustworthy Canadians will not influence monstrous acts in other countries or stop violent criminal gangs from using illegal guns.

Our results will shock only those people gullible enough to believe the Environics poll is anything other than a total fantasy.

Or do you believe the poll with 5,759 responses, simply worded, and conducted by Canada's largest firearm owners association?

**Tony Bernardo,**  
Executive Director  
Canadian Shooting Sports Association

## CONTACT US

**The Independent & Free Press**  
280 Guelph Street, Unit 77  
Georgetown, ON L7G 4B1  
Phone: 905-873-0301  
Classifieds: 905-234-1016  
Fax: 905-873-0398

**Letters to the editor**  
All letters must be fewer than 200 words and include your name and telephone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject letters.

**Delivery**  
For all delivery inquiries, please e-mail [lpolar@miltoncanadiancham-pion.com](mailto:lpolar@miltoncanadiancham-pion.com) or call 905-234-1019.



## WHO WE ARE

**Publisher**  
Neil Oliver  
**General Manager**  
Steve Foreman  
**Retail Advertising Manager**  
Cindi Campbell

**Regional Managing Editor**  
Chris Vernon  
**Regional Managing Digital Editor**  
Robyn Wilkinson  
**Distribution Representative**  
Iouliana Polar

**Classified/Real Estate**  
Kristie Pells  
**Regional Production Manager**  
Manuel Garcia  
**Production**  
Shelli Harrison