

NAHT April 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

Present: Tom, John, George, Sarah Simon, Heather B., Kim, Linda, Maggie, Austin, Bernadette, Karl, Teresa D. Excused absence: Sara K., Stephanie, Tricia, Austin. Guest: Catherine Pollard

Overview

The Network Against Human Trafficking (NAHT) board meeting focused primarily on legislative updates regarding human trafficking bills and budget requests. Catherine provided updates on several bills, including House File 1036 (comprehensive human trafficking bill) which is on the Senate's unfinished business calendar, and the \$1 million Human Trafficking Survivors Fund which was not included in the House's budget despite previous support. The board discussed concerns about the lack of funding for victim services compared to law enforcement initiatives, with Teresa Davidson sharing research showing Iowa currently spends over \$1 million sending fewer than four children out of state for services. The board approved new members Heather Glenn and Grace Lohse, and George reported positive financial news due to Maggie's annual donation through the Davenport Community Foundation. Additional topics included updates on statistical reporting efforts and concerns about the dissolution of Iowa's previous state highway patrol human trafficking program.

Topics

Statistical Chart Review

The meeting focused on discussing a statistical chart that George had sent to the board for review and collection. George mentioned that he had already sent the chart to the Southern District for them to fill in and compare to last year's data. John agreed to send the chart out and noted that it was well-timed for data collection. The group also briefly discussed scheduling challenges with the Attorney General's office, with John planning to reach out with multiple date options for future meetings.

Human Trafficking Legislation Updates

Catherine provided updates on several bills related to human trafficking and related issues currently in the legislative process at the State House. She noted that the

comprehensive human trafficking bill (House File 1036) remains on the unfinished business calendar in the Senate, with efforts ongoing to add it to the debate calendar. Other bills discussed included the massage establishment licensure bill (Senate File 2205), the record expungement bill (House File 2696), and the Katie's Law bill (Senate File 2379), which has passed both chambers and requires Senate concurrence with House amendments. Catherine also mentioned that the Human Trafficking Survivors Fund has been allocated a flat funding of \$150,000 for the upcoming year, though negotiations are still ongoing.

State Budget Appropriation Discussion

Catherine confirmed that the \$1 million appropriation was not included in the House's budget, which remained at \$150,000, despite previous support from the Governor and Attorney General's office. The Senate's target was \$48 million below the governor's budget, while the House's target was \$39 million above the Senate's. Catherine explained that with reduced income tax revenue and increased Medicaid expenses, the state had limited funds available for budget increases. The group discussed that while the state was already spending over \$1 million on out-of-state medical services, the legislators had not included the \$1 million appropriation in their current budgets.

Iowa Human Trafficking Funding Initiative

The group discussed a proposed million-dollar funding initiative for human trafficking services in Iowa, with Catherine planning to seek guidance from Teresa on mobilizing support. Maggie suggested framing the argument as keeping the money within Iowa rather than spending it elsewhere, while John and George discussed the need for adequate funding to bring services back in-state. Teresa provided detailed information about current service gaps, noting that Iowa currently spends over a million dollars sending fewer than four children out of state for services annually, and that several organizations want to expand or start new services for both children and adults once properly funded.

Tobacco Tax Proposal Discussion

Catherine provided updates on policy tracking and budget challenges, explaining that Iowa's taxpayer relief fund is being used to balance the budget rather than representing a true surplus. The group discussed a proposed tobacco tax increase, with Catherine reporting that while an initial proposal including human trafficking

funding was defeated, a new industry-written bill with only a 5-cent tax on vaping products is currently under consideration in the Ways and Means committee. The board expressed concern about the low proposed tax rate and its effectiveness in addressing public health issues, noting Iowa's lack of current tobacco taxes compared to other states.

HF 1036 Status and Discussion

The group discussed the status of HF 1036. Senator Westrich has expressed strong support and indicates that it would pass once a specific unnamed senator is available to vote. The team reviewed their recent presentation to a Senate subcommittee, where they provided data about spending on human trafficking services, though they noted the initial research was conducted quickly and may not be fully comprehensive. The discussion highlighted concerns about the current legislative focus on law enforcement rather than victim services, with participants considering various approaches including prevention programs and potential funding mechanisms like matching grant programs.

Board Meeting Minutes and Nominations

The board unanimously approved the March meeting minutes (moved by George and seconded by Bernadette) and treasurer's report (moved by Karl, seconded by Bernadette) which showed positive financial news thanks to a significant donation from Maggie. The board discussed three nominations: Grace Lohse (former board member returning to the board), Chief Paul Sikorski (already approved by the board but has not accepted yet), and Heather Glenn (co-founder of Lighthouse Foundation). The board voted to approve Heather Glynn's nomination despite not having reviewed her full resume, with Teresa and others speaking highly of her qualifications and energy. Both Heather and Grace were approved unanimously. The meeting also addressed updating the board directory, particularly regarding Austin Stubbs' new contact information.

State Human Trafficking Statistics Review

The meeting focused on discussing a memo about human trafficking statistics in the state. John and Teresa explained that the statistics were compiled from various state agencies, including the Department of Public Safety and the Attorney General's Office, but acknowledged that these numbers likely underrepresented the true scope of the issue due to unreported cases and survivors not counted by

agencies. Bernadette suggested adding a disclaimer to the chart to clarify that the figures only represent reported cases. The group also discussed ongoing efforts to gather more complete data, with John planning to follow up with the Department of Public Safety and Tom working on obtaining figures from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Human Trafficking Statistics and Initiatives

The meeting focused on gathering statistics for human trafficking reports and updates on various initiatives. George requested that John invite the U.S. Attorney for both Northern and Southern Districts, and Teresa agreed to collect data from national and Iowa victim service call centers, as well as Family Resource Centers. The team discussed progress on implementing a screening tool for DHHS, with Teresa reporting positive developments after meeting with DHHS officials. Tom emphasized the need for social media support to boost fundraising efforts, noting that financial contributions had been low in recent months. The group also addressed concerns about the dissolution of Iowa's previous human trafficking program at the Department of Transportation and discussed a new Labor Trafficking Work Group being formed by the Attorney General's office.