

**NAHT Board of Directors Minutes**  
Conference Call, Monday, September 12, 2016  
2:30 to 4:00pm

**Present on call:** George Belitsos, Teresa Davidson, Emily Devine, Stephen Eckley, Margaret Epplin, Shirley Fineran, Stephen O'Meara, Shirlee Reding, Bernadette Rixner, Gail Sheridan-Lucht, Maggie Tinsman

**Excused:** Jan Beran, Ruth Buckels, Cathy O'Keeffe

**Absent:** Liz Cox, Ann Naffier

**Guest Speakers:** Taylor Houston, Norio Umezu

Belitsos called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. Epplin, taking the minutes, was introduced. The Agenda was reviewed and accepted with no changes.

## 1. Priorities for 2017 Legislature

### Safe Harbor Laws

Dr. Taylor Houston, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Mt. Mercy University, gave a presentation and led a discussion on Safe Harbor Laws. Three handouts were attached to the agenda. There are two major components of Safe Harbor Laws: (1) Legal protection from arrest and prosecution for sexually exploited victims, and (2) services (e.g., medical, sociological, job training, etc.) for victims. 35 states have some sort of Safe Harbor Laws. Issues and concerns have arisen. To address some of these issues, Houston proposes this Board consider The Uniform Act on Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking which was described in the Safe Harbor Laws attachment.

Tinsman stated that changes in Iowa Trafficking Law, not called Safe Harbor Laws, allow youth who are being trafficked to avoid delinquency prosecution and be named CINA. However, Belitsos clarified that this was optional and that county attorneys were not utilizing CINA. Tinsman believes Iowa legislation now requires CINA and that this took effect statewide July 1, 2016. No one else on the Board was aware of this legislative change and felt that this was still up to individual county attorneys. Belitsos pointed out that AMP youth wrote letters last year to every county attorney asking them to pay attention to the CINA option and start exercising it so that exploited youth do not have to face charges.

Houston advocates for a statewide law that directs immunity from prosecution and decriminalizes human trafficking, instead of leaving this up to judges. Rixner pointed out that some judges even request that the victim identify the pimp and participate in the prosecution of their pimp.

The second portion of Safe Harbor Laws is services for victims. Belitsos reviewed federal funding through VOCA and pointed out that there has been an increase in services in the last 3 months due to VOCA funding. Of the 5 new grantees, only 2 provide services for youth under 18. Money from the state of Iowa is insufficient for services to minors. Tinsman stated that \$300,000 was transferred from offender fine fund in DPS to human trafficking for juvenile victims. Belitsos stated he understood that the \$300,000 was to fund the DPS Office to Combat Human Trafficking's new coordinator and two assistants, and not for direct services. Houston mentioned that the cost of detention beds is \$88,000 per bed, and if victims are diverted from the judicial system, this money could be directed to provide services for sexually exploited youth. Belitsos stated that detention is indeed expensive, but that 90% is paid by county of residence and that there are currently many more detention beds than emergency beds for youth. Tinsman feels that the legislature would be in favor of decriminalization and that NAHT should push for this.

Houston presented information in the Connor attachment that takes a look at making services voluntary instead of involuntary since many victims feel services are forced on them. Many victims have been involved in the legal system previously and have a negative view of legal system.

Considerable Board discussion continued about the benefits of victim advocates. O'Meara shared that Nebraska has Safe Harbor Laws with immunity from prosecution, but they are sometimes unable to hold the youth long enough to assess for safety and the youth is almost immediately back into victimization. One of the things that Nebraska is considering is to quickly connect a trained advocate with the victim. Advocates can enhance screening and assessment and stick with the victim throughout the entire process. Victims seem to prefer to work with the advocate rather than a DHS case worker. Houston worked previously in Georgia which had advocates who were essential to get these victims out of the "life" and keep them from running away. Tinsman noted that the advocate becomes a friend and mentor to the child. The advocate represents the child while the worker represents the state, where the victim might have had bad luck in the past.

Discussion will continue at the October 10 meeting after more information is gathered about Iowa law and practices. Houston will research current Iowa law regarding CINA and report back on October 10. The Board thanks Houston for his time and assistance.

### **Erin's Law**

Belitsos reported that Erin's Law failed to get through the legislative committee in the 2016 Iowa legislature. School boards have been opposed because the law will add more requirements to schools with already full curricula. The bill authors will reintroduce this year and would like to have support of NAHT. Erin's Law provides schools with age and developmentally appropriate instruction on sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, including by care givers. It also includes training for parents and teachers. 26 states have already adopted Erin's Law.

CISN discussed Erin's Law at its last meeting and asks that NAHT add Erin's Law to its legislative plans for 2017. Tinsman reminded the Board that use of the correct words is crucial to get passage and parental acceptance. Anything using "sex" has pushback. Fineran shared that there are excellent materials available which Catholic schools are using.

Rixner **moved, seconded** by Tinsman, to add Erin's Law to the 2017 NAHT legislative plan. **Motion carried.**

## **2. Review and approve Consent Agenda from August 29 Executive Committee**

Motion to approve August 8 NAHT Board minutes

Motion to review revised By Laws as proposed by Executive Committee during the October board meeting (this constitutes a 30 day notice)

Motion to update the NAHT Strategic Plan and review Executive Committee revisions at October and November Board meetings

Motion to authorize the Chair to sign a contract for a second Technology Consultant, Margaret Epplin

The Executive Committee **motion** to approve the Consent Agenda **passed unanimously.**

## **3. Presentation by Norio Umezu, United Asian Women of Iowa office.**

Belitsos welcomed Umezu to the Board meeting and asked him to introduce himself. He recently moved from California to Iowa. Umezu has received a three-year VOCA grant to create a new statewide non-profit and a coalition to advocate for victims of all forms of violence, including human and labor

trafficking, inflicted on marginalized populations, especially racial and LGBT minority groups. The new agency aims to strengthen the anti-violence movement as a whole. Iowa has adopted a progressive approach in domestic violence (immigrants, deaf, LGBT) and has invested in building anti-violence capacity in other sectors such as bullying, human trafficking, etc., in marginalized groups. Umezu asked the Board to share issues and barriers that minorities have experienced in Iowa. He also asked for suggestions for members of the new coalition.

Belitsos shared that LGBT youth and foster care youth are at higher risk to fall into human trafficking. Belitsos helped to establish an organization called AFFIRM which has, for the past two years, tried to assess the issues that LGBT child welfare teens are facing. Often rejected by their own families, they find themselves not welcome in foster care either. They run away and get involved in sex trafficking. AFFIRM has been working to assess policies and procedures to make foster care homes more welcoming to LGBT youth and weed out the ones that are not welcoming. AFFIRM also helped to introduce legislation to end conversion therapy. AFFIRM has presented at hearings before the Iowa Medical Board to defend its request that conversion therapy be banned in Iowa.

Tinsman would like Braking Traffik in Quad Cities to be involved in the new minority coalition. In the Quad Cities area, youth from all income levels and all races get into human trafficking. They might be sexually abused at home or in foster care, parents might sell their children to get money for drugs, they might be wooed by a pimp, they might be an insecure adolescent or have no loving family. Whatever the case, Tinsman finds that all had in common that they were connected to drugs first, often beginning with marijuana.

Board members made several other suggestions to Umezu for coalition membership including Cathy O'Keefe as well as investigate what is happening in Postville, Iowa, and the work of an HIV center in Sioux City. Board members were directed to send additional suggestions for coalition membership to Umezu. Umezu shared contact information. Belitsos invited Umezu to present a progress report to the Board again in early 2017, and that NAHT will do all we can to support the project

#### **4. Treasurer's report**

Belitsos reported for Beran who is on leave for knee replacement surgery. There is \$3,610 in checking and \$7,775 in savings for the regional conference in Cedar Rapids. The webpage has an online donation option through PayPal. PayPal takes 2%. \$475 in donations have accumulated in the PayPal account, and Belitsos has directed PayPal to transfer this to the NAHT bank account. This will bring the checking amount to over \$4,000.

Fineran **moved to approve** the Treasurer's report. O'Meara **seconded**. **Motion carried.**

#### **5. Progress report by Chair**

The Executive Committee is working on revised By Laws and Strategic Plan goals. Belitsos is working on a written Board member job description, duties of officers, conflict of interest statement, clarification of mission statement, and action steps for public policy planning. These will come to the Board after approval by the Executive Committee.

VOCA grantees and major new human trafficking service providers have been added to the NAHT website. Belitsos encouraged all Board members to add meetings, trainings, fundraisers, events, etc., to the website. Belitsos reminded the Board that his September 8, 5:15 p.m., email described how Board members can add items to the website.

Belitsos is now the contact for the website (Mail Chimp) and PayPal. Belitsos is passing information collected from the website (e.g., persons wishing to become volunteers) to appropriate regional groups and service providers throughout the state.

Belitsos is working on finalizing the By Laws and will propose changing the beginning of the annual year from October 1 to January 1. According to the old By Laws, election of officers takes place in the last quarter of the year, and, therefore, should have been done by now.

Belitsos has updated all registered office and contact information for the NAHT Board on the Secretary of State website.

Belitsos reported that over 700 people who work with homeless attended the IFA conference last week. This year there was a track on human trafficking and Belitsos presented at a workshop on behalf of NAHT. The keynote speaker was trafficking survivor Elizabeth Smart.

George reported that he has met with ISU Students Against Human Trafficking. He is impressed with the enthusiasm of the group and the new faculty advisor Diane Baltimore. The ISU group made a goal to work with students at other universities to help them to create their own anti-human-trafficking campus groups. The ISU group has two upcoming lectures which they asked this NAHT Board to co-sponsor. Belitsos will list NAHT as a co-sponsor and will share the lectures on the Network website.

Belitsos informed the Board that the old By Laws contain the description of an Advisory Council which has never been activated. Belitsos wishes to activate this statewide council and give volunteers an opportunity to serve. Belitsos also wishes to create a Fundraising Committee and a Speaking Bureau Committee. Belitsos will provide more details as the Board reviews the new policy documents.

#### **6. Board Member brief updates on anti human trafficking activity reports.**

Davidson: Regional Human Trafficking Training, November 17, New Covenant Church. Davidson will enter on calendar. Co-sponsors are DHS and NAHT.

Reding: Distributed anti-human trafficking literature at the Iowa State Fair. Sending letters to other churches to see if they wish to collaborate on anti-human trafficking efforts within the faith community.

Rixner: Human trafficking training, part 2, Saturday September 17, 10 to noon, Radiant Life Church, Sioux City.

Sioux Center, human trafficking conference, September 22. Speakers Anna Brewer and Salvation Army.

Sioux Center, human trafficking training, October 4, Dordt College.

Break the Silence traveling exhibit will visit Briarcliff, Lewis and Clark Center, and Cherokee.

Devine: Standing in Solidarity with Immigrants and Refugees in a Broken System. There will be mention of trafficking problem in this population.

Tinsman: Senator Grassley held panel discussion at DSM University. Tinsman presented information to Grassley and asked him to support anti-human trafficking legislation.

Rape survivor speaker and major fundraiser. October 7, noon, Bettendorf. Tickets are \$35.

Belitsos: Marti MacGibbon, human trafficking survivor and now a social worker, Tuesday, September 13, ISU Memorial Union, 6:30 p.m. Sponsored by ISU Students Against Human Trafficking and NAHT.

Meeting adjourned a 4 p.m.

Next Board meeting Monday, October 10, 2:30 p.m., and Executive Committee, Monday, September 26, 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Margaret Epplin