

# Groundbreaking study sheds light on child sex trafficking

August 7 2013, by John Kirkland

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A study from Portland State University (PSU) unveiled Monday by U.S. Attorney Amanda Marshall showed that than 469 children in the Portland metro area received social services for commercial sexual exploitation over the last four years.

The study by PSU associate professor Christopher Carey and graduate student Lena Teplitsky sheds light on child [sex trafficking](#) in the Portland metro area in a way that no other study in the United States has done. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-OR, who spoke at a press conference Monday along with Marshall, stressed the importance of the information, and the need for the federal government to join with state and local jurisdictions to fight the problem.

"Now we have concrete proof that child sex trafficking isn't just happening in the dark corners of Asia. It's happening in our community. I will make sure this report is front and center in the U.S. Senate when we resume in September," said Wyden, a member of the Senate Finance Committee and Budget Committee.

Carey and Teplitsky's report examined case data from the Oregon Department of Human Services' Commercial Sexual Exploitation Unit and the Sexual Assault Resource Center (SARC) in Portland. The documented cases were from 2009 to 2013. The cases covered a range of crimes involving using children for prostitution.

The report is unique because it focuses solely on social service cases,

providing authorities with a consistent and conservative standard for measuring the problem. Marshall said it will serve as a template that other states can use to measure their own rates of child exploitation.

Among the findings in the report:

- The average victim was 15.5 years old. The youngest was 8.
- More than 96 percent of the victims were female.
- Forty percent were Caucasian. African Americans represented 27.1 percent of the total – a disproportionately high number considering they make up only 5.8 percent of Multnomah County's population.
- More than half are dealing with addiction issues.
- Nearly half the cases have a gang connection.

Regarding the last point, Marshall said "gangs have learned that it's cheaper and less risky to traffic girls than guns or drugs."

Carey, a former deputy district attorney, is an assistant professor of University Studies at PSU. He is an authority on human trafficking, and has been called as an expert witness on the subject by the California judicial system and the Mexican Senate.

Provided by Portland State University

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