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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Madison Man Convicted of Sex Trafficking**

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Brad Schimel and Jeffrey M. Anderson, Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced Maurice Adonis Withers, 28, Madison, Wis., was found guilty yesterday of six counts of sex trafficking and three counts of interstate trafficking for prostitution. The jury reached its verdict after less than three hours of deliberation following a four-day trial in federal court in Madison.

“The shameless actions of “Johns” who pay for sex and “pimps” who facilitate sex trafficking are destroying lives,” said Attorney General Schimel. “Because of the continued partnership between local and federal law enforcement, as well as the Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI), Withers, and many others like him, have been successfully investigated, prosecuted, and held accountable for this form of modern day slavery.”

Withers was convicted of two counts of sex trafficking a minor, three counts of sex trafficking by force or threats or coercion, one count of attempted sex trafficking by force or threats or coercion, one count of transporting a minor from Wisconsin to Nevada with the intent that the minor engage in prostitution, and two counts of transporting individuals from Wisconsin to Nevada with the intent they engage in prostitution.

Acting U.S. Attorney Anderson said, “Withers exploited vulnerable young women by forcing them to engage in prostitution. I commend the trial team, investigators, and victim advocates for their dedicated and meticulous work in this case.”

Evidence presented at trial included testimony from five victims about Withers' use of coercion, force, and threats of force to cause them to engage in prostitution during 2015. In addition, statements that the defendant made via Facebook and videos recovered from a cell phone, were introduced as proof that Withers was a sex trafficker. Other witnesses presented evidence that Withers had been engaged in this type of conduct since at least 2010.

U.S. District Judge William M. Conley scheduled sentencing for July 17, 2017. Withers faces a mandatory minimum penalty of 15 years to a maximum of life in prison on the four sex trafficking of adults by force, threats or coercion counts, a mandatory minimum of 10 years to a maximum of life for the two counts of sex trafficking of a minor and the transporting a minor for prostitution charges, and a maximum of 10 years on the two counts of transporting an individual for prostitution.

The charges against Withers are the result of an investigation by the Madison Police Department; Federal Bureau of Investigation; DCI; Sauk County Sheriff's Department; and Wisconsin Dells Police Department. The prosecution of this case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Julie Pfluger and Corey Stephan.