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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG Schimel Announces 25 Arrests in Anti-Human Trafficking & Sexual Predator Stings

GREEN BAY, Wis. – Today, Attorney General Brad Schimel announced Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) Human Trafficking Bureau agents, with the aid of local and federal law enforcement, have arrested 25 individuals in stings to arrest sex traffickers, “johns,” and child abusers in July and August 2017.

“The only reason human trafficking exists is because there is a demand for buying sex. Those creating the demand – the johns who buy victims and the pimps who are exploiting them – are not safe to exploit and coerce people in our state,” said Attorney General Schimel. “When I was sworn in as attorney general, I put johns on notice. We are coming for you, and for some – we already got you. DOJ’s Human Trafficking Bureau’s arrests this summer will not be the last.”

In operations focused in northern and eastern Wisconsin, DCI agents arrested 25 individuals in operations that targeted those seeking children for sexual purposes and “johns”, individuals who were soliciting prostitutes. Some of those arrested were knowingly seeking 14- and 15-year old children for sexual purposes.

“This investigation is a great example of local agencies working with Wisconsin DOJ-DCI, in a joint investigation and managing an operation targeting human trafficking in our state,” said Vilas County Sheriff Joseph Fath. “This operation was coordinated in a very smooth and organized manner. The results were very successful and all of our staff working with DOJ came away with a lot of knowledge that can be used in future investigations.”

Those arrested were charged with soliciting a prostitute, pandering, soliciting a child for prostitution, attempted second degree sexual assault of a child, child enticement, using a computer to facilitate a child sex crime, exposing a child to harmful material, and exposing a child to harmful narrations.

“The Door County District Attorney’s Office was involved in a multiagency law enforcement operation targeting individuals trying to sexually exploit children and individuals soliciting adult prostitutes,” said Door County District Attorney Colleen C. Nordin. “Investigating and prosecuting these cases is a priority for my office. The number of predators interested in sexual contact with minors is shocking and highlighted by the success of these types of operations. Thanks to the outstanding work by our law enforcement partners, we are able to make Door County safer for both our families and the many visitors to this community.”

DCI agents also helped the Brown County Sheriff’s Office in the agency’s own anti-human trafficking efforts in July, when the agency arrested 35 individuals during a four day johns suppression operation in late July.

These operations were part of the National Johns Suppression Initiative, a coordinated operation across 17 states and that included 37 law enforcement agencies. The Cook County Sheriff’s Office reports that nationwide, at least 1,020 sex buyers were arrested, 15 individuals face trafficking-related charges, and 81 individuals were recovered and offered services.

The following agencies aided in the success of these operations in Wisconsin:

Cottage Grove Police Department	Monona Police Department
Dane County Sheriff’s Office	Rock County District Attorney
Door County District Attorney	Sheboygan County District Attorney
Door County Sheriff’s Office	Sheboygan County Sheriff’s Office
Eagle River Police Department	Sheboygan Police Department
Juneau County Sheriff’s Office	Sheboygan Falls Police Department
Kohler Police Department	Sturgeon Bay Police Department
Madison Police Department	U.S. Marshals
Marshfield Police Department	Vilas County Sheriff’s Office
McFarland Police Department	Wisconsin State Patrol

Attached are booking photos of those arrested with charges. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty.

The fight against human trafficking is a fight that requires a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach. In 2015, DOJ and the Wisconsin Department of Children and

Families (DCF) implemented the Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force. Since its inception, the task force has been developing a cross-system, trauma-informed service and response systems for minors who have been trafficked or are at-risk of being trafficked. Attorney General Schimel also [recently established](#) the Human Trafficking Bureau at DOJ, which will provide a coordinated statewide strategy to identify, target, and prosecute traffickers in order to combat human trafficking and providing needed assistance to survivors.

DOJ encourages both rural and urban public agency executives and business owners, particularly those in the hospitality and service industries, to download and display anti-human trafficking posters. The posters, available in both English and Spanish translations, come in multiple sizes and can be [downloaded at no cost online](#).

For more information about human trafficking in Wisconsin, and how you can help victims and end the demand, go to www.BeFreeWisconsin.com.