

May 16, 2024

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone (850) 245-0150



OFFICE OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL
ASHLEY MOODY
— Stronger, Safer Florida —

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

VIDEO: Florida Launches Statewide Human Trafficking Hotline After Radical CEO Demands National Hotline Stop Giving Timely Information to Police



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Florida officially has a statewide human trafficking reporting number. Following information and a subsequent letter to Congress regarding the National Human Trafficking Hotline operated by Polaris, failing to disseminate timely suspected human trafficking tips to local law enforcement, Attorney General Ashley Moody and Florida’s Statewide Council on Human Trafficking, working with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, created a Florida-specific tipline. Monday, Governor Ron DeSantis signed a bill mandating the new statewide tipline be displayed on human trafficking awareness signs across Florida. Anyone who suspects human trafficking in Florida is now urged to call 855-FLA-SAFE.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “The State of Florida is committed to ending human trafficking. Unfortunately, the woke Stanford and Columbia-educated CEO of Polaris has pushed a radical agenda to delay the dissemination of vital information to local law enforcement in favor of what she calls a ‘victim centered approach’. As a former federal prosecutor, former judge, and the wife of a law enforcement officer, I know that we can be putting these heinous criminals behind bars quicker, sparing other potential victims AND connecting survivors to the resources

they need—if tips are sent to police in a timely manner. Pushing a narrative that we can stop a crime by working against law enforcement is ridiculous. It has been proven, time and time again, as a failed approach in cities and states across the nation. Floridians who suspect human trafficking need to call 855-FLA-SAFE.”

In September 2020, Polaris announced its new CEO, Catherine Chen, who according to the [appointment announcement](#), “accepts that we cannot arrest our way out of this problem and understands that trafficking in all its forms is the end result of inequities, abuses of power and massive systemic and governmental failures.” According to her [bio](#), Chen “has spent more than two decades building innovative social justice programs and pushing for policy changes to address the root causes of sex and labor trafficking.”

The largest failure to date seems to be Chen’s refusal to provide timely tips about trafficking situations to law enforcement so they can stop traffickers and rescue victims.

Last year, Attorney General Moody and a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general across the nation [voiced concerns](#) to Congress regarding the federally-funded National Human Trafficking Hotline which has been solely operated by Polaris since 2007. Recent discoveries show that Polaris only forwards tips to state law enforcement about adult victims in limited circumstances. This practice is contrary to what Polaris advertises, to what states and organizations have come to expect and rely on from this partnership, and to what it was created to do when it initially received funding from Congress. Additionally, in some cases, states discovered a delay of several months before the hotline shared tips with law enforcement.

The [letter](#) from the attorneys general states, “It appears to us that the Hotline is not performing the services it is already funded to perform. Without changes to Polaris’s operating procedures, our state anti-trafficking initiatives gain little from participation in the National Hotline...we cannot in good conscience continue to ask the public to share tips about trafficking in their communities if the Hotline will not give us, as law enforcement, the opportunity to address those tips. It serves no one well to do so, least of all the victims that could be helped by a tip phoned in by a good Samaritan who sees their suffering and tries to do the right thing.”

To read a copy of the letter to Congress, click [here](#).

Additionally, Attorney General Moody supported U.S. Rep. Laurel Lee’s [National Human Trafficking Hotline Enhancement Act](#), a bill that would require entities who contract with the National Human Trafficking Hotline to cooperate with state and local law enforcement when receiving tips through the Hotline.

Floridians who suspect human trafficking need to call 855-FLA-SAFE.

###