



What people think,  
feel and do

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The Selah Way Foundation

# Sex trafficking survey



## Key findings

1 April 2020



**SELAHWAY**  
FOUNDATION

A GLOBAL NETWORK OF LEADING  
ANTI-SEXUAL EXPLOITATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

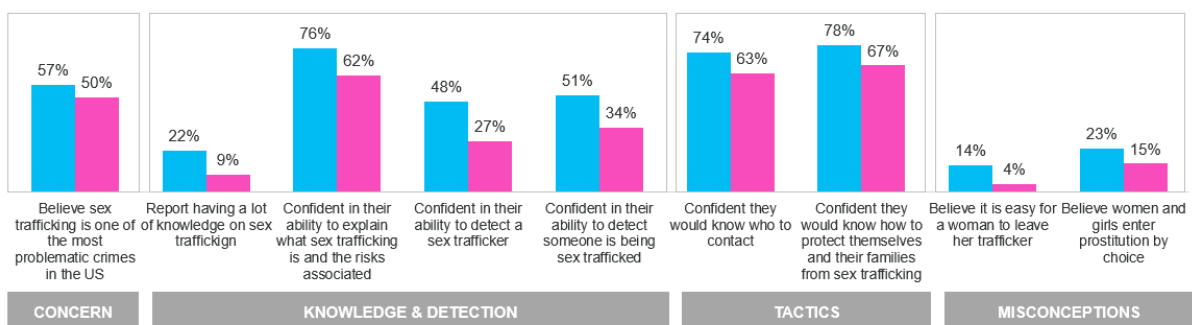
# The parental confidence effect

## Parents feel more knowledgeable about sex trafficking but biases shine through.

Parents of kids under 18 are more concerned and perceive themselves as more knowledgeable about sex trafficking than people without children—They are over twice as likely to report having “a lot of knowledge” about sex trafficking (22% vs 9% of non-parents) and are more confident they would be able to detect a sex trafficker or someone who was being used for sex trafficking. They are also more confident that they would know how to protect themselves and their families. However, when you drill down to specific knowledge, parents of kids under 18 are more likely to hold some common misconceptions about sex trafficking—They are more than 3 times as likely to believe that “it is easy for a woman to leave her trafficker” (14% vs 4% of non-parents) and 8 percentage points more likely to believe that “women and girls enter prostitution by choice” (23% vs 15%).

### ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEX TRAFFICKING: PARENTS OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 VS. NON PARENTS

■ Parents of Children Under 18 ■ Non-Parents



Base: 651 US parents of children under 18; 805 US adults without children

## California

### 2 in 5 Californians think there is low or no risk of sex trafficking in their area.

In 2019, the state of California reported the highest number of human trafficking cases of any state in the US.<sup>1</sup> Just in February, an operation to fight human trafficking in the state resulted in over 500 arrests.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, 2 in 5 Californians think there is low or no risk of sex trafficking in their local area—the same as in the rest of the country. Though 60% report having some or a lot of knowledge about the issue, a huge proportion (70%) wouldn't feel confident detecting someone who is a sex trafficker, or someone being used for sex trafficking (65%). Many misconceptions remain in the state—27% believe women who are sex trafficked are all from ethnic minorities and a staggering 58% either don't know or don't think that porn and sex trafficking are directly linked.

## Texas

### A third of Texans believe women who are sex trafficked are all from ethnic minorities.

In 2019, Texas reported the second highest number of human trafficking cases among US states, after California.<sup>3</sup> Despite this, a third of Texans think there is low or no risk of sex trafficking in their local area. 55% feel they have some knowledge or a lot about the issue, but a huge proportion (69%) wouldn't feel confident detecting someone who is a sex trafficker, or someone being used for sex trafficking (65%). Many misconceptions about sex trafficking remain in the state—a staggering 57% either don't know or don't think that porn and sex trafficking are directly linked and a third believe women who are sex trafficked are all from ethnic minorities. Over half (55%) of Texans do not know that children under the age of consent can be arrested for prostitution.

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<sup>1</sup> [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#), 2019.

<sup>2</sup> “[518 arrested in California operation targeting human traffickers](#),” Los Angeles Daily News, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#), 2019.

## Florida

### 1 in 3 Floridians think there is low or no risk of sex trafficking in their area.

In 2019, Florida reported the third highest number of human trafficking cases among US states, after California and Texas.<sup>4</sup> Despite this, over a third (35%) of Floridians think there is low or no risk of sex trafficking in their local area. Nearly two thirds (64%) feel they have some knowledge or a lot about the issue, but a huge proportion (68%) wouldn't feel confident detecting someone who is a sex trafficker, or someone being used for sex trafficking (68%). Many misconceptions about sex trafficking remain in the state—29% believe women who are sex trafficked are all from ethnic minorities and 44% either don't know or don't think that porn and sex trafficking are directly linked.

## New York

### Most New Yorkers feel ill-prepared to recognize the signs of sex trafficking.

In 2019, New York reported the 6<sup>th</sup> highest number of human trafficking cases among US states, after California, Texas, Florida, Ohio, and Georgia.<sup>5</sup> Despite this, 39% of New Yorkers think there is low or no risk of sex trafficking in their local area. Over half (53%) feel they have some knowledge or a lot about the issue, but a huge proportion (65%) wouldn't feel confident detecting someone who is a sex trafficker, or someone being used for sex trafficking (69%). Many misconceptions about sex trafficking remain in the state—1 in 5 New Yorkers believe that women and girls enter prostitution by choice and 55% either don't know or don't think that porn and sex trafficking are directly linked. 3 in 5 don't know that children under the age of consent can be arrested for prostitution.

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<sup>4</sup> [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#), 2019.

<sup>5</sup> [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#), 2019.

# The Selah Way Foundation

The Selah Way Foundation was built from nine years of the best practices, measurements, outcomes and audited financials of Selah Freedom. It is a collaborative network uniting the best and focusing on the most effective initiatives to eradicate sexual exploitation and trafficking: Prevention, Protection, Provision. We are creating a shield for the next generation, equipping professionals on the front lines and giving a second chance to survivors of sexual exploitation. We are exposing the root issue of childhood sexual abuse and fighting to forever eradicate this injustice from our world.

## About Opinium

**OPINIUM** is an award-winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people **think, feel** and **do**. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

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