



# COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Thomas J. Dart, Sheriff

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## **Nearly 500 Sex Buyers Arrested in National Sex Trafficking Sting Operation**

COOK COUNTY, IL – A national coalition of local law enforcement agencies conducted a sting operation that led to the arrests of 496 would-be sex buyers (or “johns”) and 14 pimps/traffickers, Cook County Sheriff Thomas J. Dart announced today.

The eighth “National Day of Johns Arrests” ran for 18 days from July 17 through August 3. The sting brought together 28 law enforcement agencies throughout 14 states in a widespread crackdown on the demand for purchased sex.

The operation also targeted pimps and traffickers who have forced victims into lives of prostitution. 14 men were taken into custody on charges of pimping, trafficking or promoting prostitution.

Sheriff Dart conceived these sweeps in 2011 to highlight the role of sex solicitors as perpetrators to this violent and exploitative industry. Since then, the Cook County Sheriff-led national coalition has grown from eight agencies to 59. The campaign has evolved to highlight the role of classified ad site Backpage.com as a conduit for the sex trade – 172 johns ended up in handcuffs after answering what they thought were online ads for prostitution on Backpage, while 12 more were arrested for soliciting sex off of Craigslist ads.

Charges stemming from this effort include adult and juvenile felony sex trafficking, criminal solicitation of a minor, pimping, promotion of adult and juvenile prostitution and public indecency. In addition to the sex-related arrests, the sweeps yielded charges relating to drug trafficking and possession of illegal firearms.

The results of the latest National Day of Johns Arrests sting reflect growing momentum for this national campaign. Across eight operations over a four-year stretch, the collaborative effort has led to the arrests of 2,328 total johns.

“Sex trafficking continues to destroy countless lives, and deterring demand for paid sex is the most effective way to eradicate this reprehensible underground trade,” said Sheriff Dart. “I’m proud of the

fantastic results among this growing national coalition as we forcefully deliver the message that prostitution is not a victimless crime.”

Cumulative numbers from the eighth “National Day of Johns Arrests” campaign are as follows:

- 14 sex trafficking/pimping arrests
- 496 sex solicitation arrests (johns)
  - \$174,205 in minimum fines
  - 172 johns arrested as a result of fake Backpage.com ads
  - 12 johns arrested off of fake Craigslist.com ads
  - 232 cars towed/forfeited from johns
  - 16 weapons seized from johns
  - 19 narcotics charges for johns
  - 11 johns taken into custody due to outstanding warrants
  - 3 johns taken into custody for either resisting or evading arrest
- 111 prostitution victims recovered
  - 98 adults
  - 13 juveniles

Noteworthy anecdotes from the sweep include:

- The combined efforts of the Greater Phoenix Area (Phoenix PD, Phoenix FBI CSEC unit, Glendale PD, Chandler PD, and Mesa PD) resulted in the arrests of 150 johns, 91 of which came off of Backpage.com ads
- Seattle PD recovered 33 victims overall, including a 15-year-old girl whose mother attempted to sell her for sex
- Seattle PD also arrested a pimp after detectives saw him beating a victim in the street during their operation
- The Harris County Sheriff’s Office arrested a federal border agent in full uniform as well as a man who had his infant child in the backseat while attempting to purchase sex
- Glendale PD arrested six men for attempting to solicit sex from a juvenile off of Backpage.com, while Seattle PD arrested 12 men for attempting to solicit sex from a juvenile off of Craigslist.com
- Boston PD conducted a street intervention to reach out to prostituted individuals, resulting in three rescues
- Dayton PD conducted a street decoy operation where a john attempted to trade crack for sex; shortly thereafter, detectives witnessed a robbery in progress and arrested a man for robbery, assault on a peace officer and resisting arrest
- The Cook County Sheriff’s Office arrested a john attempting to solicit sex from a bicycle
- Cincinnati PD arrested a charged a man with drug trafficking after finding him in possession of 800 grams of marijuana as he attempted to solicit sex

- The combined efforts of Phoenix PD and the Phoenix FBI CSEC Unit resulted in the arrests of 69 johns
- Las Vegas PD recovered eight juvenile trafficking victims
- Tempe PD arrested 21 men via Backpage.com ads

Agencies who participated in this sting include:

1. Phoenix PD (Arizona)
2. Phoenix FBI CSEC Unit (Arizona)
3. Glendale PD (Arizona)
4. Chandler PD (Arizona)
5. Mesa PD (Arizona)
6. Tempe PD (Arizona)
7. Denver PD (Colorado)
8. Cook County Sheriff's Office (Illinois)
9. Aurora PD (Illinois)
10. Lake County Sheriff's Office (Illinois)
11. Boston PD (Massachusetts)
12. St. Paul PD (Minnesota)
13. Minneapolis PD (Minnesota)
14. Hennipen County Sheriff's Office (Minnesota)
15. Minnesota FBI (Minnesota)
16. Gerald D. Vick Human Trafficking Task Force (Minnesota)
17. Las Vegas PD (Nevada)
18. Minot PD (North Dakota)
19. Cincinnati PD (Ohio)
20. Dayton PD (Ohio)
21. Miamisburg PD (Ohio)
22. Riverside PD (Ohio)
23. Portland PD (Oregon)

24. Pittsburgh PD (Pennsylvania)
25. Greenville County Sheriff's Office (South Carolina)
26. Harris County Sheriff's Office (Texas)
27. Newport News PD (Virginia)
28. Seattle PD (Washington)