

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Cook County, Illinois, Announces Results of First-Ever Nationally Coordinated Sting Operation to Arrest Johns and Mute Demand for Prostituted Individuals**

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(Chicago, Illinois—October 11, 2011) The Cook County Sheriff's Office today announced the results of a Columbus Day weekend pilot sweep of "Johns" called "National Day of Johns Arrests." The sweep involved eight law enforcement agencies simultaneously conducting sting activities on the streets, in hotels, brothels, via the internet, and elsewhere. The last of the operations concluded early Monday morning.

The following agencies participated:

- Cook County Sheriff Police Department (Illinois)
- Aurora Police Department (Illinois)
- Cincinnati Police Department (Ohio)
- Elgin Police Department (Illinois)
- Las Vegas Police Department (Nevada)
- Los Angeles Police Department (California)
- Phoenix Police Department (Arizona)
- Newport News Police Department (Virginia)

Public awareness around the operation was made possible by a grant from Demand Abolition, a program of Hunt Alternatives Fund. Demand Abolition supports the movement to end modern-day slavery by combating the demand for illegal commercial sex in the United States.

Participating agencies have shown their commitment to this initiative through offering "Johns Schools," which is an educational program for offenders that drives home the point that prostitution is by no means a victimless crime. The school has been proven to reduce recidivism. The jurisdictions support the Johns School concept developed in San Francisco's First Offender Prostitution Program, which was evaluated by Abt Associates in a study sponsored by the National Institute of Justice. Arrestees meeting eligibility criteria are offered a diversion option in which prosecution is sometimes avoided by paying a fee and attending a class about commercial sex and human trafficking. The classroom component of the program is designed to deter men from pursuing commercial sex by educating them about the legal, health, and crime victimization risks inherent in the activity. The classes are also intended to reduce the motivation for involvement in prostitution by building empathy for the providers of commercial sex and for the inhabitants as well as legislation that would support this initiative. In addition to punitive measures, each jurisdiction offers restorative justice through other rehabilitative services that are either voluntary or mandatory.

As a result of the sweep in the eight jurisdictions:

- 216 Johns Arrested
- 223 Total Arrests
- \$238,490 Fines
- 71 Vehicles Towed
- 2 Pimps arrested
- 8 Drug Busts
- 247 Total Charges\*

*\* Includes weapons/vehicles used during a prostitution related offense.*

The majority of offenders were arrested in street and hotel venues.

Demand Abolition launched a multi-year, multi-stakeholder effort in May 2010 to end modern-day slavery by combating the demand for sex trafficking and commercial sex in the United States. While Cook County Sheriff's office staff were sitting on the Demand Abolition steering committee and serving as technical experts, the Cook County Sheriff's Office was simultaneously developing its Human Trafficking Response Team (HTRT). The HTRT is comprised of survivors of prostitution who work closely with the Cook County Sheriff's Police Officers that are trained to identify victims who have been lead into prostitution out of desperation and survival. The victims are offered services and safe housing opportunities to assist them in leaving their current lifestyle.

In addition, the Cook County Sheriff's Office has produced a "Johns School" DVD that has been shared with the partnering law enforcement agencies. Subsequently, the Demand Abolition program is funding the replication of more than 4,000 DVDs for distribution to law enforcement agencies nationwide.

This successful pilot is expected to lead to future collaborative JOHNS arrest sweeps throughout the nation with more jurisdictions joining this fight against the solicitation of sex. No longer is the woman, who in most cases is a victim of someone who is selling her body, the target; Johns, seen as the true perpetrators, are increasingly becoming the target of law enforcement.

A summary of all data collected as a result of this collaborative sting operation is available on the Cook County Sheriff's Office Website, Hunt Alternatives Fund website ([www.demandabolition.org](http://www.demandabolition.org)) or by contacting one of the participating agencies as follows:

- Director Frank Bilecki, Cook County IL Sheriff's Office Director of External Affairs
- Sue Olafson, Elgin IL PD Public Information Officer
- Dan Ferrelli, Aurora IL PD Public Information Officer
- Lou Thurston, New Port News VA PD Public Information Officer
- Danita Kilgore, Cincinnati OH PD Public Information Officer
- Officer Bill Cassell, Las Vegas NV PD Public Information Officer
- Commander Andrew Smith, Los Angeles CA PD Public Information Officer
- Sgt. Steve Martos, Phoenix AZ PD Public Information Officer
- Carol Edgar, Demand Abolition Public Information Officer

Commenting on the success of this pilot operation, Cook County Sheriff Thomas J. Dart issued a grim warning to men who violate the laws against prostitution: “We will catch you, and you are going to face serious consequences. We are not going away.”