While human trafficking is a subject of recent interest in the scholarly community, the fact that it occurs in the United States as well may be news to most Americans, who think it happens only in some far-off Third World country. For those aware of its existence in America, it is assumed that a Federal Law, passed in 2000, will take care of the problem. But as this research shows, it is becoming evident that this may not be enough. State laws are needed to effectively combat the problem of human trafficking in America. Yet little or no research has been done about human trafficking on a local level; even less exists on factors that lead state governments to pass laws to stop human trafficking. Our research finds states are increasingly passing laws on the subject by 2011, but some do a better job of securing these key anti-human trafficking laws. States with more economic freedom, stronger labor unions, higher murder rates (to call attention to the problem), and more calls to a human trafficking hotline are more likely to pass laws designed to curb human trafficking.

Introduction: Human Trafficking “Taken” Seriously

“I don’t know who you are. I don’t know what you want. If you’re looking for ransom, I can tell you I don’t have money but what I do have are a very particular set of skills. Skills I have acquired over a very long career. Skills that make me a nightmare for people like you. If you let my daughter go now, that will be the end of it. I will not look for you, I will not pursue you. But if you don’t, I will look for you, I will find you and I will kill you.” Bryan Mills (Liam Neeson) from the movie “Taken.”

People remember this famous quote from the movie Taken (Besson and
Morel 2009). And while it was great to see Liam Neeson beat up some bad guys and save his daughter, there was a deeper message hidden within the movie. Taken helped expose the world to the dark truths of human trafficking. We hear that human trafficking is a serious problem throughout the world. But human trafficking is a problem in all countries, including the United States. Human trafficking rates vary when compared state by state, causing us to wonder what can be done.

We looked at multiple factors (social, economic, and political) possibly linked to a state's battle against human trafficking, and evaluated their significance using a chi-square statistic test. After every factor was tested on a state's anti-human trafficking laws, only a few were statistically significant: human trafficking hotline calls, labor union membership, economic freedom and murder rates. Political factors play a lesser role when determining human trafficking rates. But an insignificant factor can be just as helpful as a significant factor because we learned not only how some factors are related to human trafficking, but also how some have little to no effect on trying to stop human trafficking at a state level.

**Literature Review**

**An overview of the problem**

Many people believe that slavery was something that ended decades ago; however, human trafficking is the modern day form of slavery and it happens daily (Zalan 2013, 2). Human trafficking comes in many forms such as forced manual labor, involuntary servitude in factories, brothels, hotels, homes, restaurants, businesses, or sexual slavery.

When it comes to better understanding human trafficking we must first break it down, as human trafficking is the exploitation of a person. Whether that means sexually or through labor, involuntary servitude is human trafficking (United States Department of State 2012). Through the collection of data we began seeing the real roots of the problem we are facing when it comes to the trafficking of individual.

“Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations directorate in fiscal 2012 initiated 894 human trafficking investigations, made 967 arrests and 559 indictments, and secured 381 convictions. The Federal Bureau of Investigation had about 450 pending investigations at the end of last year. The National Human Trafficking Resource Center, a hotline funded in part by the federal government and operated by the Polaris Project, received 20,369 calls last year, referencing 2,333 potential victims…41 percent of those victims referenced foreign nationals, 43 percent referenced United States” (Zalan 2013, 2). Zalan (2013, 2) goes on to claim that in 2004 there were an estimated 16,500 people trafficking into the United States and most of the foreign victims identified were from India, Honduras, Thailand, Guatemala, the Philippines, and Mexico.

While laws have been improved, trafficking is still tough to fight. Some
researchers combine sex workers and trafficking together by saying no one would voluntarily submit to prostitution, while others make a distinct line between voluntary and forced (Laczko 2005, 11).

**Social/Crime Factors**

While there is more research being conducted, more funding, and more public data, there is still not always an urgency to solve the issues that need to be faced. Short-term studies are not long enough for the researchers to be able to get adequate information. There is more concern with international trafficking over internal trafficking. “Is internal trafficking a stepping stone to international trafficking? Does international trafficking have a detrimental effect on those left behind, and does this lead to more internal trafficking” (Laczko 2005, 9)?

The fact that we don’t know all of the statistics about human trafficking is reiterated by Deputy National Security Advisor Denis McDonough in a meeting with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and heads of various government departments last year. In an article by CNN, McDonough states “Let me emphasize, when it comes to trafficking, one thing that we do know is that we ... don’t know enough,” he said. “… In his statement today, the president spoke of trafficking as form of exploitation that hides both in the dark corners of our world and in plain sight in our own towns and cities. We know in certain areas we don’t have great data on the scope of the problem” (Suh 2012).

Traditionally sex and anything relating to that subject were taboo topics and never to be discussed in polite society. This approach was not a help for victims of sexual or domestic abuse, since those that were abused did not have safe refuge in which to seek help. Society has begun to realize that the greatest need of “protection has been afforded to victims of other violent crimes that carry an increased risk of re-victimization” (Pierce and Quillen 2013, 228-229).

When states are more involved with helping the victims, then there is less of a prevalence of human trafficking and domestic and sexual abuse. Texas has made some pretty large strides in the right direction toward finding a solution to protecting those who are abused and later trafficked. To start with, legal orders separating abuser from abused can last from “two years... to the lifetime of the victim or the offender” (Pierce and Quillen 2013, 231). Texas has made the provisions to protect those who are also human trafficking victims. Bond conditions are set up for those who are awaiting trials and have been captured on accusations of abuse, but there are strict conditions attached to the bond (Pierce and Quillen 2013, 234).

The key to any victim is breaking the abuse cycle and creating a safety network that is a safe environment for them to recover and heal. Although the victim desires to escape, this is a difficulty due to the psychological bonds that the abuser has formed. Texas realizes this and is enabling their prosecutors and legal personnel to “[understand] something of the complex journey from victim to sur-
vivor of intimate partner violence” (Pierce and Quillen 2013, 237). This is why it is so important for the legal system to realize the victims as more than just unnamed faces passing through a courtroom; although laws and protective measure add a much-needed degree of safety for the victims, only the personalized touch will bring healing long-term and increase the chances of the victims not falling back into these roles.

McGarrell and Hipple (2010, 69) propose new mechanisms that should replace the faulty old provisions of the past and create new collaborative problem solving provisions that will allow states the ability to reduce crime.

During the early 1990s, the nation experienced a steady decrease in violent crime (McGarrell and Hipple 2010, 69). The subsequent increase in violent crimes indicated that there were flaws in the states’ policing systems. Therefore, the effectiveness of particular policing strategies for reducing crime was being questioned. “In response to these types of concerns, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) requested that the Sagamore Institute conduct a study that could point to promising policing strategies that might inform local, state, and federal policy with the goal of violent crime prevention and control” (McGarrell and Hipple 2010, 69).

Statistically, crime rates and policy effectiveness are seen as having a negative correlation because positive policy effectiveness produces a decrease in crime while poor policy effectiveness produces a rise in crime. For example, human trafficking is an increasingly growing epidemic that plagues the United States; yet national policymaking to combat the crime can be ineffective. “There are also inherent limitations,” which is likely because of issues caused by “the devil in the details” (McGarrell and Hipple 2010, 81). By paying more attention to details, states become more adequate in passing legislation that will result in better policework.

**Economic Factors**

Economic factors in states may also be playing a role in human trafficking. Zalan (2013) implies a direct correlation exists between lower class immigrants and human trafficking victims. Many of the victims are lured by false promises of a good paying job that will provide enough for the victim to support their family. More often than not, they end up working 16 or more hour days, seven days a week with no pay (Zalan 2013, 2). Because of this, human trafficking affects not just a few people but everyone. “As people become vulnerable to exploitation and businesses continually seek the lowest-cost labor sources, trafficking human beings generates profit and a market for human trafficking is created” (Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton 2010, 114). The economics of human trafficking “analyzes the choices individuals and organizations make in the human trafficking market” (Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton, 2010: 116).

Human trafficking statistics are largely imprecise but the U.S. government
estimates that 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders annually (Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton 2010, 118). According to Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton (2010, 120), “the number of hours devoted to labor supply depends on the wage rate offered, unearned income, and various personal characteristics: gender, age, education, composition of household, number of own children, social status and family wealth.” These are referred to as push factors. Pull factors are the local economy, culture, political instability, globalization, and the availability of information (Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton 2010). These push and pull factors can lead to human trafficking.

An individual will make the decision to relocate if he or she thinks the “wages and opportunities in other areas are higher than those within the area of origin” (Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton 2010, 121). Vulnerable individuals tend to be less educated people who migrate because the wages for low-skilled jobs are higher in another area. Internationally, when legal migration is reduced through stricter immigration rules and an increase in border control, illegal migration occurs more often. This desire for a better life and the difficulty of migrating legally demand the help of human traffickers who can provide border crossings, false papers, and the funds needed to cover the cost of travel and relocation. This demand allows for traffickers to make a bigger profit.

“While money flows relatively free from businesses to households in legal markets, in the human trafficking market, money flow is disrupted” (Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton 2010, 122). Vulnerable individuals are given little to no income and the traffickers make the profit. This helps the sellers to be “monopolistically competitive” (Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton, 2010: 118). According to Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton’s source Belser, “the revenue from human trafficking is large, an annual estimated average of $13,000 per trafficked victim totaling $32 billion” (2010, 124). Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton (2010, 124) report that slavery is a $23 billion industry. Because human traffickers “face monetary (operational), physical (risk to life and health), psychological, and criminal (risk of being caught and severity of punishment) costs” (Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton 2010, 124), it is an incentive to sell their product at a price above average total cost in order to balance the risk to profit ratio and still make a profit. Human traffickers play the part of the middleman. They provide employers, who use trafficked labor, with workers who have the desired characteristics.

The goal of a firm is to maximize profit at the lowest costs manageable. Since labor is the majority of business costs, if the cost of labor increases then the cost of production increases while profit decreases. It is for this reason that employers may demand trafficked individuals in order to decrease the cost of labor. Historically this was practiced in American business, agriculture, and industry due to a surge of immigrants. Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton state that, “long before 1776, Africans were coerced to immigrate and common European labourers were brought to America in one of several forms of debt-bondage known collectively
as ‘indentured servitude” (2010, 128). The American industry still relies on immigrants to provide the least expensive labor. By providing a minimum level of well-being for trafficked labor, employers avoid, “government-regulated human rights, constitutional rights, safety issues, or benefits for workers” (Galli, Schauer, and Wheaton, 2010: 128), and maximize their return.

The demand for trafficked labor goes beyond employers into domestic purposes to serve individuals and households. Employers also benefit from the ease and low cost at which they can discard a trafficked individual, not to mention the power of coercion, threats to family, and confiscation of documentation they can use to prevent a victim from complaining to officials.

As a consumer, you want the most benefits for the lowest price. This makes the consumer’s goals align with those of the employer. It does not matter who the trafficked individual is, whether it be a prostitute or the worker harvesting the oranges for orange juice, as long as there is a demand by a consumer who is willing to pay for the service or good then there will always be someone to supply that demand.

**Political Factors**

Human trafficking happens everywhere, even in the United States. And it can occur to anybody, both citizens and non-citizens. But how can we identify human trafficking? There are two types of human trafficking: labor and sex trafficking. Labor trafficking usually takes place in poor working conditions that don’t meet minimal requirements. Yet the government has trouble catching these employers, because the workers are either too scared to report them or don’t understand what is happening to them.

On a national level, human traffickers have shifted their priorities from sex trafficking to labor trafficking. When the Bush Administration was in charge, they believed prostitution and child sex abuse were the most important trafficking cases (Harvard Law Review 2013, 6). With the Obama Administration, labor trafficking is now just as important (Harvard Law Review 2013, 8).

“Tensions between antitrafficking policies and border control are whether to protect national borders or trafficking victims. Professor James Hathaway argues that ‘the antitrafficking campaign has … resulted in significant collateral human rights damage by providing a context for developed states to pursue a border control agenda under the cover of promoting human rights’” (Harvard Law Review 2013, 8). Hathaway argues that, because of possible immigrant exploitation, human trafficking will increase with raised tension between different policies. “Border control under local, state, or federal governments causes law enforcement officials to locate undocumented workers, and encourages those officials to view the workers primarily as criminals who need to be deported and secondly as potential trafficking victims who need to be assisted. This occurs even though the TVPA (Trafficking Victims Protection Act) explicitly requires federal agencies to
serve trafficking victims without regard to the immigration status of such victims” (Harvard Law Review 2013, 9).

The Department of Labor (DOL) investigates trafficking violations, helping slow down human trafficking throughout the United States. “Finally, DOL has begun the ‘We Can Help’ campaign, a public-awareness initiative that aims to educate workers about their rights and inform them that they can safely and privately report workplace violations, even if they are undocumented” (Harvard Law Review 2013, 15). The Obama Administration believes that educating people provides America its best chance at preventing human trafficking (Harvard Law Review 2013, 8).

Human trafficking prevention, on a national government scale, has improved steadily year by year. And when the national government finalizes its anti-trafficking plans, it will end up providing an example for states to follow. Most states have already passed some laws, but soon they will be able to prosecute human traffickers much more frequently and easily once the DOL and other organizations finalize the finishing touches of their plans and missions.

**Combating Human Trafficking**

It was noted that in the 1990s the United States began taking a strong interest in human trafficking. “Congress committed the United States to attacking human trafficking on three fronts: prosecuting violators, protecting victims, and preventing trafficking. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act prohibits ‘severe forms of trafficking in persons,’ of which it designates two types: “sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion’ and labor trafficking which involves the recruitment, harboring, transportation, and provision, or obtaining of persons for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery” (Harvard Law Review 2013, 1012). The government specifically labeled what sex and labor trafficking was by law. “As Professor Dina Francesca Haynes notes, anti-trafficking efforts within the United States have been inadequate largely because the same persons charged with protecting [victims] are also charged with deporting undocumented persons, arresting prostitutes, and detaining and charging those working without authorization” (Harvard Law Review 2013, 1013). The common misconception with human trafficking is that it always involves movement across borders. The main point of human trafficking is just plainly exploiting people. There will always be a need for a cheaper labor source; as a result, undocumented workers will always be an attractive option. Undocumented workers will not require minimum or health benefits. They even will work in some of the worst conditions. The main problem is people are not really properly educated on what exactly labor and sex trafficking really is.

It is important to mention that most trafficking cases in the United States are not prosecuted. There have been at least as many labor trafficking victims as
there have been sex trafficking victims, if not more. “Anti-trafficking investigation and prosecution resources have for years been devoted disproportionately to sex trafficking. Even when the government has prosecuted labor trafficking violations, it has tended to focus on non-citizen employees rather than U. S. companies” (Harvard Law Review 2013, 1015).

The Importance of Focusing on State Laws

Recently our country celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. In his speech Obama noted that any modern day human trafficking is considered to be slavery. “And last year, the official count of states with human trafficking laws reached 49” (Heinrich and Sreeharsha 2013, par. 3). With this kind of turnout and support against the crime you would think that states efforts were impressive but some have passed only one or two laws on the subject, while others have done so much more.

“Anti-trafficking efforts began in the United States in earnest with the enactment of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000” (Heinrich and Sreeharsha 2013, par. 5). Before the TVPA was passed people would be charged with human trafficking but there were no actual laws that had been broken. This act created actual laws against forced labor, sex trafficking, and document withholding in which human traffickers could be prosecuted against. This act also offered many benefits to the victims of human trafficking in hopes that it would help jump-start recovery and a new successful life which is usually not an outcome for these victims, as well as get the states involved. “Indeed, the Trafficking Protocol requires states to ‘strength, to the extent possible, such border controls as may be necessary to prevent and detect trafficking in persons.’” (Harvard Law Review 2013, 1019-1020).

All states but Wyoming have at least some laws against human trafficking but the laws they have differ. Some states only have laws against sex trafficking, which is a huge problem considering 78 percent of trafficking is labor related.

Wyoming GOP Governor Matt Mead, a former U.S. Attorney who once prosecuted human trafficking cases, praises the federal law, but touted the need for state laws on human trafficking. “I don’t know who will be U.S. Attorney in 10 to 15 years” he said (Celock 2013). A state representative, Cathy Connolly (a Democrat) agrees. Her bill is actually tougher than the TVPA on human traffickers, and provides more social services to victims (Celock 2013).

Celock (2013) concurs with these Wyoming politicians. “A federal law already bans human trafficking in the United States, but advocates say that companion state laws are necessary to empower local law enforcement and offer social services to victims.”

Few states require law enforcement to be trained in this area. The Urban Institute and Northeastern University conducted a study to see ways that human trafficking in the United States could be reduced. In their study they found that
there is hardly any trafficking prosecution in the U.S. despite the national laws against it (Heinrich and Sreeharsha 2013).

There are many reasons as to why these traffickers are not being prosecuted and most of them point back to law enforcement. Most do not have the proper training and knowledge in order to decipher a case. Others feel that the illegal immigrants involved in many of these cases are not as important as if an American citizen was the victim. Another problem is that these traffickers are prosecuted as a sex offender instead of the real crime they committed.

For example if the traffickers tell their victims that because they are not legal citizens, they will be deported if they call for help. Our law enforcement does nothing but back that idea up. If efforts were made to support these victims once they are free then the turnout of trafficking crimes will grow vastly because they will be more willing to cooperate with officers. Building trust with victims and training officers on how to identify trafficking is the key to fix human trafficking.

In order to try to fix the problem many organizations have joined together against this such as the Uniform Law Commission which is working towards a goal of making a law that all of the states should adopt in order to have a national understanding of human trafficking (Heinrich and Sreeharsha 2013).

In order to stop this crime information is the key. “Through the 5/20 Campaign, the Global Freedom Center is training 5 million professionals by the year 2020 to identify and prevent human trafficking” (Heinrich and Sreeharsha 2013, par. 22). This crime will not be easy to stop because of its vast nature; however with organizations like these there is hope for these victims and our country.

The Need For More State Laws, And Strong Ones

Most states have at least one law passed against human trafficking, but how many of these laws are on the books? The global perspective of this issue and the laws passed internationally are a strict focus of many educators, students, and researchers, but the domestic issue of human trafficking is not examined as closely.

In an attempt to solve this problem, the prosecutions of criminals of exploitation have “traditionally been a matter of state and local concern” (Dysart 2013, 620). In other words, law enforcement is delegating the prosecution of criminals to jurisdictions that do not always have the power or finances to ensure that the level of legal prosecution will eliminate the issue. In addition to this difficulty, states do not always “specifically address minor sex trafficking, and many of the laws are not as comprehensive and protective as federal law” (Dysart 2013, 620). In many cases states and the local legal system is doing its best to ensure that this crime is eliminated and effectively prosecuted, but there is not the power in these jurisdictions as at the federal level; some states are not passing as many of these laws as they can.

If states and local jurisdictions had the power to enforce the laws, than
there would be less of this crime because often by the time the federal legal system has acted to pass laws, the crime has become almost too prevalent to stop. This was discovered to be true when Congress passed “the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005, the issue of domestic minor sex trafficking had become more prominent” (Dysart 2013, 624). The local and state governments need to be strengthened in their prosecution and finances to allow them to have the resources to combat this issue. The sole entity for passing laws against sexual trafficking should not be the federal government. Local and state entities must step up and pass their own laws.

How State Human Trafficking Laws Matter

Some of the first laws against human trafficking date back over a hundred years, a prime example being the Mann Act of 1910 (Flowers 2006, 216) which “prohibits the transportation of a woman or girl in interstate or foreign commerce for the purposes of prostitution or any other immoral activity” (Flowers 2006, 216). However, one can see that this century-old law’s wording leaves plenty of wiggle room for would-be offenders, whether their victim was male, or if they claimed they were transporting them for other purposes. It would later be updated in 1986 (Flowers 2006, 216) to become more gender neutral, and more implicit by clarifying illegal sex activity, and removing the commercial aspect of the law, making it easier for prosecutors to make convictions against child molesters in general. While this could be seen as the first step towards anti-sex trafficking legislature in the US, more recent steps have been taken with the implicit intention to combat this horrible crime.

The Trafficking Victim Protection Reauthorization Act was enacted in 2006 (Flowers, 2006, 216) and “renewed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, the first major anti-trafficking law in this country” (Flowers 2006, 216). This law is a major step towards combating human trafficking; it provides funds for authorities to pursue domestic traffickers who could be tried more harshly than before, and allows for government sourced services for their victims. Most importantly, this legislature strikes at the root of the problem, by allowing “…for greater efforts in going after the people who pay to sexually abuse and exploit trafficking victims” (Flowers 2006, 216).

And while these powers and abilities for prosecutors are a major step in the right direction towards the elimination of this terrible crime within the U.S.’ borders, the fact they have only been so recently made federal crimes is troubling, and there is always more work to be done, not only by lawmakers, but also, being a democracy, by citizens too via informed voting, reaching out to their representatives, and being vigilant for any signs of trafficking in their day to day life and alerting the proper authorities to it.

“The research tends to try to show that trafficking is a problem and is limited to mapping routes and identifying the main countries of origin and desti-
nation. Long-term research is needed to have more widespread approaches. There needs to be more of a focus on the traffickers, clients, and law enforcements. This will mean that instead of focusing on how trafficking is a problem, we can look more closely on how well we are problem solving” (Laczko 2005, 14).

Statistics of trafficking cases are on the rise by trying to solve the concerns of not having the ability to compare and share data. These issues come in when there is not enough data to be able to do the sharing and comparing so there are no official statistics on trafficking over the years. The US State Department has started the Officer to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, which posts annual report assessing global efforts to combat trafficking. But some states see the right to deny sharing due to the confidentiality of the information being asked for (Laczko 2005, 11). A focus on the anti-human trafficking efforts of states will therefore be productive.

Theory & Hypotheses

Our theory is that political, economic, and social factors of each of the fifty states explain how certain states do a better job of combating human trafficking, in the form of passing laws to stop the practice than others. At the end of the section, a table is attached that details all of the hypotheses tested in this analysis.

Social Factors Related To Crime

When focusing on the social factors of each of the fifty states, we look at whether these independent variables help to pass more laws in favor to control the issues. Crime rates of the states provide a hypothesis showing that states with a high crime rate are more likely to pass human trafficking laws in their efforts to control rampant crime.

We expect the independent variable of murder rates will show that states with a high murder rate are more likely to pass human trafficking laws because murder is a more publicized form of crime. This is more likely to be successful due to the fact that when society thinks of a crime, murder is usually where the mind goes to first because this is the attention grabbing news that is publicized daily which leads us to see a stronger relationship with murder combating human trafficking. Incarceration rates can also affect states, when high, to be far more likely to pass human trafficking laws in their efforts to contain crime.

In regards to the sex offender rate, we see states with a higher sex offender rate are more likely to have human trafficking problems and are consequently more likely to pass laws to combat this issue. This is logical because of the amount of sex offenders and cases being made, this would push people towards making laws to stop the percentage of sex offenders from growing anymore so this would decrease human trafficking, given the perceived connection between human trafficking and the sex trade.

Hotline calls for human trafficking can be linked to states that have larger
numbers of calls for this topic. These calls are more likely to help pass laws concerning human trafficking because it shows concerned citizenry on this particular issue in these states.

**Economic Factors**

Economically, we can see how well states are passing laws to better combat human trafficking. States with a higher GDP per capita are more likely to pass human trafficking. A strong state economy could mean more money to train officers and incarcerate traffickers. These states are also more likely to be focused on minimizing modern-day slavery and preserving their status as a state with a vibrant economy, where human trafficking can be bad for business.

States with a minimum wage (especially a strong one) are more likely to pass human trafficking laws in their efforts to protect their workers. States with labor unions are more likely to pass human trafficking laws because modern-day slavery is a direct threat to job security of union members, so this provides a relationship between labor unions and human trafficking laws.

States with high levels of economic freedom are more likely to pass human trafficking laws because economic freedom allows these states more leverage to make an effort in minimizing modern-day slavery. Such states with robust free markets do not have people who must resort to corruption to get ahead, either due to burdensome regulations or a few government employees possibly linked to such illegal practices.

**Political Factors**

Looking at the political factors involved in whether or not a state passes human trafficking laws or not, we are able to make the assumption that the independent variables of corruption, gridlock, and term limits all do not correlate to whether or not a state passes human trafficking laws based on them.

States with a higher corruption rate are less likely to pass human trafficking laws because of general lawlessness in the state. Additionally, the corrupt officials could be linked to human trafficking. When we focus on the independent variable of gridlock, we see states with gridlock are also unlikely to pass human trafficking laws because of disunity between the parties, causing it to make it hard to pass any type of law.

We can hypothesize the same pattern with term limits not significantly affecting combating with human trafficking because states with term limits are unlikely to pass human trafficking laws due to lawmakers lacking the experience needed to pass such laws. With this, we can expect all of our political factors to have a negative relationship with passing laws on human trafficking.
Table 1: Hypotheses Testing A State’s Ability To Pass Laws Against Human Trafficking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable – Social Factors</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime Rate</td>
<td>States with a high crime rate are more likely to pass human trafficking laws in their efforts to control rampant crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder Rate</td>
<td>States with a high murder rate are more likely to pass human trafficking laws because murder is a more publicized form of crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarceration Rate</td>
<td>States with a high incarceration rate are far more likely to pass human trafficking laws in their efforts to contain crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Offender Rate</td>
<td>States with a high sex offender rate are more likely to have human trafficking problems and consequently are more likely to pass laws to combat this issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Trafficking Hotline Calls</td>
<td>States with a large number of human trafficking calls are more likely to pass human trafficking laws because it shows a concerned citizenry in these states.</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable – Economic Factors</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP Per Capita</td>
<td>States with a higher GDP per capita are more likely to pass human trafficking laws because they are focused on minimizing modern-day slavery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Wage</td>
<td>States with a higher minimum wage are more likely to pass human trafficking laws in their efforts to protect their workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Unions</td>
<td>States with bigger labor unions are more likely to pass human trafficking laws because modern-days slavery is a direct threat to job security of union members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Freedom</td>
<td>States with high economic freedom levels are more likely to pass human trafficking laws because free markets mean fewer burdensome regulations that might drive people to illegal business practices.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable – Political Factors</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>States with a higher corruption rate are less likely to pass human trafficking laws because of a lack of political stability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gridlock</td>
<td>States with gridlock are less likely to pass human trafficking laws because of a disparity between the parties may make it hard to pass any type of law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Limits</td>
<td>States with term limits are less likely to pass human trafficking laws because lawmakers may lack the experience to pass such laws.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Design

Dependent Variable

The data on all fifty states was found on the 2011 Analysis of State Human Trafficking Laws which is gathered by the Polaris Project, a group whose focus is purely on stopping human trafficking (Polaris Project 2013). Each state had ten categories to fulfill in making it to the Tier 1 level, the top level in combating human trafficking. The state’s tier levels are based on how much effort they are putting forth in meeting all ten requirements (Polaris Project 2012).

Figure 1: States And Their Record On Passing Laws Against Human Trafficking

The tier rankings were ranked according to effectiveness ranking and a state that was succeeding was then given a “one” (for Tier 1 and 2, or green and yellow states on the map) meaning most laws against human trafficking were passed while a state with a ranking of “zero” (Tier 3 and 4, or orange and red states) was given that ranking because in these states, many anti-human trafficking laws still have yet to be passed.

Independent Variables: Social/Crime Factors

To measure the crime rate of a state, we looked at the number of violent crimes per 100,000 in each state in the year 2011. The data comes from “info-please.com,” which received its information from the “Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime in the United States, 2011” (FBI 2013). When a state had a crime rate of more than 350 per 100,000, then they received a score of 1. If their crime rate was anything below 350, then their score was a 0.
We looked at the murder rate of each state per 100,000 in the year 2011. The information came from the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC 2013). The average murder rate of the states with a death penalty was 4.7, while states without a death penalty had an average murder rate of 3.1. If the state's murder rate is 4.7 or higher, then it received a 1. And a state who had less than 4.7 would receive a 0.

This data set measures the number of incarcerated individuals in each state. There were four groups that the states were placed in and ranked highest rate to lowest, by quintiles. The data on incarceration rates comes from the Pew Research Center (2005). In cases where there is a high incarceration rate (the top two quintiles) the states get a score of “1.” In states where there is a lower incarceration rate (the third, fourth and fifth quintile), the states receive a score of “0.”

We compiled the number of registered sex offenders per 100,000 people for each state using 2009 US Census information gathered by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). States that had 200 sex offenders or more per 100,000 people received a one, and states that had a lower rate than this received a zero. The NCMEC data was published in a report by National Public Radio (Hurt 2010).

To measure the variable “NHTRC Hotline Calls” we looked at each state separately and the number of calls received at the Nation Human Trafficking Response Center Hotline, reported by the Polaris Project. States that received more than 750 calls were marked with a “1” and states receiving any less than that number were marked with a “0.”

**Independent Variables: Economic Factors**

In measuring the variable GDP per capita, data on the states comes from the Bureau of Business and Economic Research (2013), which calculates with the mid-population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division to figure the real per capita gross domestic product by state. States were ranked one through fifty, with one being the state with the highest GDP and fifty-one being the state with the lowest ranked states. In cases where state GDP is ranked one through twenty-five, these states are given a score of “1,” and for those with ranked state GDP twenty-six through fifty-one receive a “0.”

We gathered data on the minimum wage of states in comparison to the Federal Minimum Wage. Data on the state minimum wages comes from U. S. Department of Labor (2012), which lists every state’s minimum wage, if they have one. States where the minimum wage was above or at the $7.25 Federal Minimum Wage get a “1”. States where the minimum wage was below the $7.25 Federal Minimum Wage or there was no minimum wage get a “0.”

The data collected for labor unions comes from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012). States receive a 0 if their state has 14.9 or less of their population as members of a union, and states above 14.9 percent involvement in a labor union receive a 1.
Economic freedom data comes from the Economic Freedom of North America 2011, which details the "restrictions on economic freedom imposed by governments in North America" (Ashby, Bueno, and McMahon, 2011: 1). States which are in the top three quintiles of economic freedom (having the most freedom) receive a "1," while those in the two least free quintiles receive a "0."

**Independent Variables: Political Factors**

For the variable of "state corruption," data was generated by the online database, State Integrity Investigation, where states were individually ranked among all 50, the lower the number the least amount of corruption. The 24 least corrupt states were given a "1," while the most corrupt states (25th-50th) were given a "0."

For our gridlock measure, we gathered data on the House, Senate and the governor of all the states in the US, the data we collected was based on which party had control of each branch. Data on whether the governor of the state was Democrat, Republican or Independent was gathered from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL 2011; 2013). To find information on what party controlled the house and the senate as well as showing if the party is unicameral again we used National Conference of State Legislatures (2011; 2013). Data on term limits came from the NCSL (2010) as well.

**Table 2: How Each Variable Is Measured And Where The Data Comes From.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEPENDENT VARIABLE</th>
<th>HOW IT IS MEASURED</th>
<th>DATA SOURCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Trafficking</td>
<td>1 = Tier 1 &amp; Tier 2 States (Pass Many Laws Against Human Trafficking) 0 = Tier 3 &amp; Tier 4 States (Pass Fewer Laws Against Human Trafficking)</td>
<td>The Polaris Project (<a href="http://www.cultureofabuse.com/?p=3821">http://www.cultureofabuse.com/?p=3821</a>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEPENDENT VARIABLE</th>
<th>HOW IT IS MEASURED</th>
<th>DATA SOURCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime Rate</td>
<td>1 = States with 350+ crimes per 100,000 residents 0 = States with less than 350 crimes per 100,000 residents</td>
<td>FBI, Crime in the United States, 2011 (<a href="http://www.infoplease.com/us/statistics/crime-rate-state.html">http://www.infoplease.com/us/statistics/crime-rate-state.html</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder Rate</td>
<td>1 = States with a murder rate of 4.7 or higher 0 = States with a murder rate of 4.6 or lower</td>
<td>Death Penalty Information Center (<a href="http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/murder-rates-nationally-and-state">http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/murder-rates-nationally-and-state</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarceration Rate</td>
<td>1 = States with the highest and 2nd highest rates 0 = States with the 3rd, 4th, and lowest rates</td>
<td>Pew Research Center (<a href="http://mapscroll.blogspot.com/2009_08_01_archive.html">http://mapscroll.blogspot.com/2009_08_01_archive.html</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Offender Rate</td>
<td>1 = States with more than 200 sex offenders per 100,000 residents 0 = States with lower rates</td>
<td>National Center for Missing &amp; Exploited Children (<a href="http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyid=127235597">http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyid=127235597</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Trafficking Hotline Calls</td>
<td>1 = States with 750 or more calls in a year 0 = States with less than 749 calls in a year</td>
<td>Polaris Project (<a href="http://act.polarisproject.org/o/5417/f/0/blastContent.jsp?email_blast_KEY=1160584">http://act.polarisproject.org/o/5417/f/0/blastContent.jsp?email_blast_KEY=1160584</a>) and (<a href="http://www.polarisproject.org/state-map">http://www.polarisproject.org/state-map</a>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

Social/Crime Factors

*Crime Rate* -- We analyzed the data comparing crime rates and their effect on human trafficking. Do crimes rates have a significant impact in the passing of human trafficking laws? Our chi-square statistic was 0.109 indicating that the variable is not statistically significant.

*Murder Rate* -- Did a state’s murder rate impact passing human trafficking laws in 2011? Overall, the chi-square statistic was 3.44, which was not statistically significant to our analysis at the .05 level (3.841). However, the murder rate variable is weakly statistically significant at the .10 level.

*Incarceration Rates* -- Are states’ incarceration rates related to those that pass human trafficking laws? This hypothesis was not supported by the evidence. Overall, we had a chi-square statistic of .48, which was statistically insignificant in our analysis.

*Sex Offenders* -- Our test to see if there was a correlation between sex offenders and passing laws on human trafficking found that these numbers aren’t different enough from an expected model to be statistically significant. In the end, the correlation was found to be nonexistent and the numbers were indeed
Hotline Calls -- This research aimed to find out if the number of calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline had a significant relationship to the states passing laws to stop human trafficking. The chi-square statistic was determined to be 5.92. This is well above the 95% confidence needed. This means that there is a direct relationship between the number of calls made to the National Human Trafficking Hotline and the states' ability to pass human trafficking laws.

Economic Factors

GDP Per Capita -- Do the funds a state has available affect, and the strength of its economy, explain whether the state has passed human trafficking laws by 2011? This hypothesis was found not to be supported by the evidence. Overall, we had a chi-square statistic of 0.34, which was not significant in our analysis.

Minimum Wage -- Are states with minimum wage averages above the national minimum more likely to pass human trafficking laws? This hypothesis is not supported by the evidence. Overall, we had a chi-square statistic of 0.4034, which is not statistically significant to our analysis.

Labor Unions -- Is Labor Union participation in the United States related to human trafficking? The evidence provided does somewhat support this hypothesis. From this data and random model, we have received a chi-square statistic of 2.710, which is larger than 2.706 that we needed to have to have significance at the .10 level. This evidence provides us with information, that we can be at least 90% confident that there is a weak relationship between labor unions and human trafficking, but is still significant.

Economic Freedom -- Does the economic freedom of a state determine whether or not the state decides to pass human trafficking laws? The results of the test came back to show that the economic freedom of a particular state was significant in whether or not if the state decided to pass anti-human trafficking laws. The test that resulted in economic freedom being significant had a chi-square statistic of 4.902, which was significant at the .05 level. Therefore, in 2011, economic freedom was a significant factor of human trafficking in the United States.

Political Factors

Corruption -- We compared the variables of the amount of human trafficking laws passed by a state and a state's corruption in order to find a connection between these variables using data from 2011. We found at the chi-square statistic to be 1.342 at the 0.05 level, showing that the findings are not statistically significant; a state’s corruption level is unrelated to whether or not a state passes anti-human trafficking laws.

Gridlock -- We found that with gridlock states, there still was only a chi-square statistic of 0.18, which means it’s not significant when comparing in to the
human trafficking data. For 2011, it does not matter whether a state is gridlocked or not when it comes to passing human trafficking laws. 

*Term Limits* -- If a state has term limits does that have an impact on whether a state passes a lot of human trafficking laws or not? We find this data not significant (a chi-square statistic of 1.69); we see no relationship between human trafficking and term limits.

**Table 3: Which Factors Impact States Passing Laws Against Human Trafficking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEPENDENT VARIABLE</th>
<th>CHI-SQUARE STATISTIC</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIP WITH STATES PASSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING LAWS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime Rate</td>
<td>0.109039236</td>
<td>A state's crime rate is unrelated to whether that state passes laws against human trafficking or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder Rate</td>
<td>3.435319377*</td>
<td>States with higher murder rates are more likely to pass laws against human trafficking to stop all crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarceration Rate</td>
<td>0.483091787</td>
<td>A state's incarceration rate is unrelated to whether that state passes laws against human trafficking or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Offender Rate</td>
<td>0.143975631</td>
<td>A state's sex offender rate is unrelated to whether that state passes laws against human trafficking or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Trafficking Hotline Calls</td>
<td>5.917874396**</td>
<td>States that have a significant number of calls concerning the issue of human trafficking are more likely to pass laws against human trafficking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP Per Capita</td>
<td>0.348899624</td>
<td>A state's GDP per capita is unrelated to whether that state passes laws against human trafficking or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Wage</td>
<td>0.403449284</td>
<td>A state's minimum wage, whether above or below the national average, is unrelated to whether that state passes laws against human trafficking or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Unions</td>
<td>2.710333145*</td>
<td>A state with more labor union membership is somewhat more likely to pass laws against human trafficking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Freedom</td>
<td>4.902552880**</td>
<td>States that are freer economically are more likely to pass laws against human trafficking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

We researched which social, economic and political factors led a state to pass human trafficking laws. The research showed that the majority of our factors did not have any statistically evidence to support them.

On the other hand, we did have a few factors with varying levels of statistical evidence to support them. First, our strongest factor was the number of National Human Trafficking Hotline calls. Our chi-square statistics determined that there is a direct relationship between the number of calls made to the National Human Trafficking Hotline and the state’s ability to pass human trafficking laws. Next, the economic freedom was another statistically significant factor in passing laws to combat human trafficking.

Also, there were two factors that were slightly significant. The state’s murder rate was shown to have a slight impact on whether human trafficking laws were passed. Last, a state’s level of worker involvement in labor unions was another factor shown to have a slight impact on human trafficking laws.

In closing, we found two factors that were very significant to our hypothesis. We need to further research data from 2014, to see if any progress has been made, and whether such factors are still significant today.
References


