Statement By State Senator Jose Peralta On Father-Son Sex Trafficking and Prostitution Operation

JOSE PERALTA   April 24, 2012

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"The sex trafficking and prostitution operation dismantled by the Manhattan District Attorney's office, NYPD and federal authorities is yet another example of the barbaric treatment trafficked women are subjected to for the profit of ruthless pimps.

"It also underscores the need to reclassify sex trafficking as a violent felony. in recognition of the brutality of the crime and the punishment it warrants. I recently introduced a bill in the New York State Senate that would make sex trafficking a violent felony and increase the minimum jail sentence to five years. The minimum sentence currently is one to three years.

"Classifying sex trafficking as a violent felony not only raises the minimum sentence for a first offense, it can put someone that commits multiple violent offenses away for life under the persistent violent offender law. I hope the details of the horrors made public by this investigation help to further raise awareness about sex trafficking and provide an impetus to get appropriate sentencing laws passed.

"The involvement of livery drivers in this case highlights a concern that I and others have previously raised. While involving only a very small minority of drivers, the shuttling of trafficked women, as part of the so-called "free delivery" advertised by pimps, is not a new

practice.

"It is why I introduced state legislation and support a City Council proposal to include sex trafficking awareness in the training and education program that is required for initial driver licensure and subsequent renewal. Someone aware of the brutal reality is less likely to participate in the continued exploitation of these women.

"I applaud the investigative work done in this case by Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, the NYPD and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement."

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