

June 13, 2023

Dr. Alexis Piquero
Director
Bureau of Justice Statistics
810 7th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20531

Dear Director Piquero:

I write to urge the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to add questions to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) regarding sex trafficking encounters and victimizations. It is my understanding that BJS is currently in phase one on a redesign of the survey, and thus, I ask that these important questions be considered.

Since 1973, NCVS has collected valuable, self-reported information on the rate of various crimes. Annually, NCVS collects data from a nationally representative sample of more than 200,000 people who are contacted and surveyed on their experiences with heinous crimes, including rape and other forms of sexual assault, regardless of whether such experiences were reported to law enforcement. The survey also collects broader information pertaining to the nature, circumstances, and consequences surrounding the crime(s). However, NCVS currently does not address sex trafficking as part of its annual survey.

As you may know, trafficking data in the United States is largely fragmented and offers an incomplete view as to the presence of the issue, and opportunities to better track this information remain. The insufficiency of this data undermines the scope of the problem and hinders efforts to effectively curtail and eventually eliminate trafficking, including the pain it inflicts upon its innocent victims. It should be BJS' utmost priority to obtain essential data on heinous crimes like sex trafficking, which could subsequently assist lawmakers, victim service providers, and law enforcement in finding ways to better understand, combat, and respond to the issue. Further, the text of the most recent version of the survey lends itself to many places where trafficking questions could be logically inserted.

As one of the nation's most valuable crime victimization surveys, NCVS is failing to assist authorities by continuing to not collect this data. I urge BJS to add questions to NCVS regarding sex trafficking encounters and victimizations. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator