



National Summit on Human Trafficking and the State Courts

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HON. JONATHAN LIPPMAN
NEW YORK STATE CHIEF JUDGE

CLOSING REMARKS, OCTOBER 9, 2015

I WANT TO THANK ALL of the fabulous presenters and speakers who shared their stories these past few days. Special thanks to the Center for Court Innovation, the Center for Public Policy Studies, and all the faculty involved in facilitating the break-out sessions today. Hearing from states across the country through the panels and talking with so many of you personally has given me great encouragement and confidence about the potential for change on this all-important topic. Now that each state has an action plan in hand, the next step is to act boldly and to make this a priority area in our agendas, in our budgets, and in terms of allocating staff and resources.

We have a unique opportunity to be part of the modern-day abolitionist movement. By finding ways to empower human trafficking victims by connecting them to resources, I believe we will see real change in our courts and in our states. We must re-dedicate ourselves to the fight against trafficking. Prosecutors and law enforcement must hold responsible the traffickers who ensnare victims in their tangled web. Defense attorneys should connect clients who have been trafficked to service providers who can help them break the cycle of exploitation. Lawmakers should endeavor to strengthen our anti- trafficking legislation and to ensure that our laws target the real perpetrators of crime and reflect the reality of what is happening in our communities. The judiciary must take a leadership role and leverage its resources so that trafficking victims can access freedom and safety. Our actions will have repercussions around the country and the globe. What we do now, will have a lasting impact on the next generation, and each life saved and transformed is precious and valuable.

Thank you all for being partners in this fight, and I look forward to all the progress to come!