IT’S ON!! WI and PA Go Head-to-Head in Awareness-Raising Super Bowl!

Madison, WI February 1, 2011 – Everyone in Wisconsin knows that Sunday is “the Big game!” But, are they aware of the connection between major sporting events and the trafficking of human beings - mostly girls and women? And which team’s fans know and care more about this issue?

Before the Pack steps up with their “A game” this Sunday, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA), The Rape Crisis Center (RCC), SlaveFree Madison, and Project Respect are among those asking football fans to step up and sign the pledge for “Celebration without Exploitation.”

In a stunning show of sportsmanship, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) has answered by issuing the same challenge to their Steelers fans.

“Sure, there’s a big game on Sunday,” said Jeanie Kurka Reimer, Executive Director of WCASA. “But we know that the real competition is showing our understanding of the impact of human trafficking and registering our support by signing the petition and showing Pennsylvania what we’re made of.”

“Human Trafficking is a problem all year round, but major events like the Super Bowl tend to increase trafficking activity, unfortunately,” said Kelly Anderson, Executive Director of the Rape Crisis Center, based in Dane County. “We really need the community to go the whole nine yards on this issue; we need to educate each other, we need to report when we see activity we suspect might involve trafficking, and we need to spread awareness about this issue.”

The sponsoring agencies are confident that Wisconsin can carry the day, but they expect Pennsylvania to prove to be a worthy opponent, and are proud that informed, educated football fans will be bringing their awareness of human trafficking to Texas this weekend. “This is no time to fumble,” added JoAnn Gruber-Hagen, Chair of SlaveFree Madison. “We need a team effort here.”

The pledge can be viewed, and signed at: http://www.wcasa-blog.org/super-bowl-of-activism/.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pledge Text:

• It’s not OK that the average age of children forced into prostitution is 13 years old (1).
• It’s not OK that human beings trafficked for sex or labor is a $32 BILLION business world-wide(2).
• It’s not OK that in the wake of the 2009 Super Bowl in Tampa, Florida’s Department of Children and Families took in 24 children who’d been trafficked to the city for sex work (3).
• It’s not OK that Texas already sees about 10,000 trafficking victims a year (4) and hosting the Super Bowl could make that number rise significantly…

Who is more Committed to Ending Human Trafficking? Packer fans, or Steelers fans?

This weekend, these two teams will bring their A game to Texas. Let’s see which fans can show the most awareness and opposition to human trafficking!

Therefore, we the undersigned challenge fellow fans to step up and join us in resolving to celebrate the Super Bowl without causing the exploitation or harm to young girls and women. Sign this petition in opposition to human trafficking.

In addition, as proud Cheese Heads or Steelers fans we pledge:

• To support “Celebration without Exploitation” -- I oppose the buying or selling of girls and coerced women for sex during the Super Bowl weekend or any time, in Arlington Texas or anywhere else;
• To educate myself about human trafficking and its impact on our communities; and,
• To share this information with my family and friends, to help increase awareness of this dehumanizing crime and work toward freedom for all people.

In Dallas, TX:

Mosaic Family Services, Inc.,
4144 North Central Expressway,
Suite 530 Dallas, Texas 75204,
(214) 821-5393 for international victims.

Letot Center, 10505 Denton Drive,
Dallas, TX 75220-2630,
(214) 352-8134 for American minors.

Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA)
http://taasa.org/
(512) 474-7190 [Austin]

In Wisconsin:

WCASA
http://www.wcas.org/
Phone: (608) 257-1516

Rape Crisis Center (Dane Co.)
http://danecountyrcc.org/
Phone: (608) 251-5126
Crisis Line: (608) 251-7273

Sexual Assault Center
(Green Bay)
http://www.familyservicesnew.org/
SAC.htm
Phone: (920) 436-8890
Crisis Line: (920) 436-8899

SlaveFree Madison
http://slavefreemadison.squarespace.com/
apeters@chorus.net

Project Respect (Milwaukee)
http://www.uncom-milw.org/
projectrespect/pages/welcome.html