

# Opinion: Help for victims of sex-trafficking

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Regarding the Aug. 29 front-page article “[In Las Vegas, child sex-trafficking victims go to jail](#)”:

Many officers in real-life horror stories of teenage sex trafficking are well-meaning. They seem to recognize that what they are doing is not the answer and instead is harmful to the young victims who are being deceived at every turn. The answers were mentioned but have not been implemented in Nevada. Not jail time but safe harbor and restoration. Forty percent of human trafficking cases in the United States involve the sexual exploitation of a child, and there are nearly 300,000 children in the United States at risk of sexual exploitation. Those children who are taken off the streets need restorative care, treatment and education so that healing can take place in a safe environment.

Treatment programs exist but not in the numbers that are required to help these young people move from victims to survivors. Vista Maria is a model program in Michigan affiliated with the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, as is my organization. Vista Maria provides a full continuum of care from residential services, to health and wellness and foster care when appropriate. Our local, state and federal governments need to address this issue and offer grants to create more live-in treatment centers to care for the whole person and make each person whole.

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