

**DIVISION OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**  
**STATE OF MONTANA**

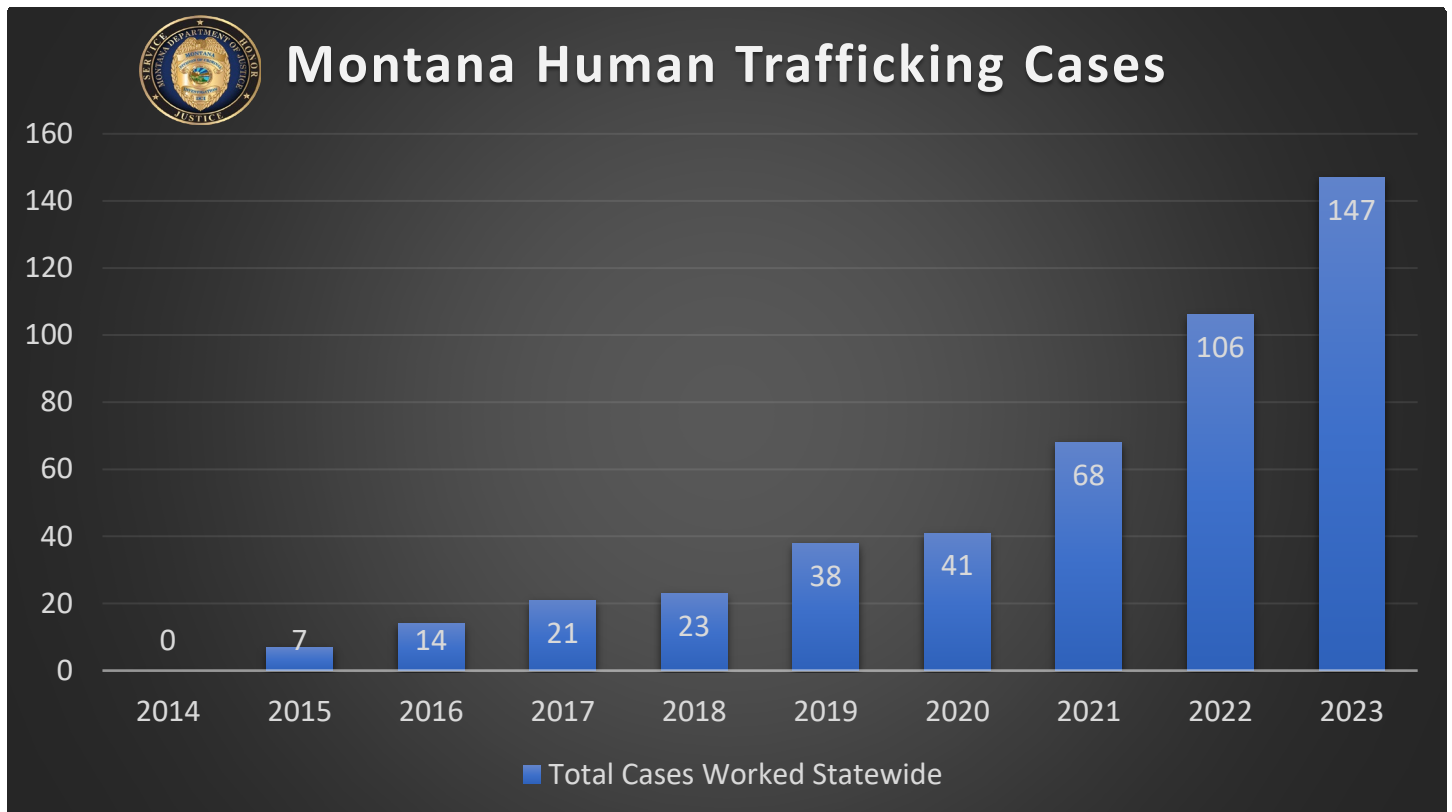
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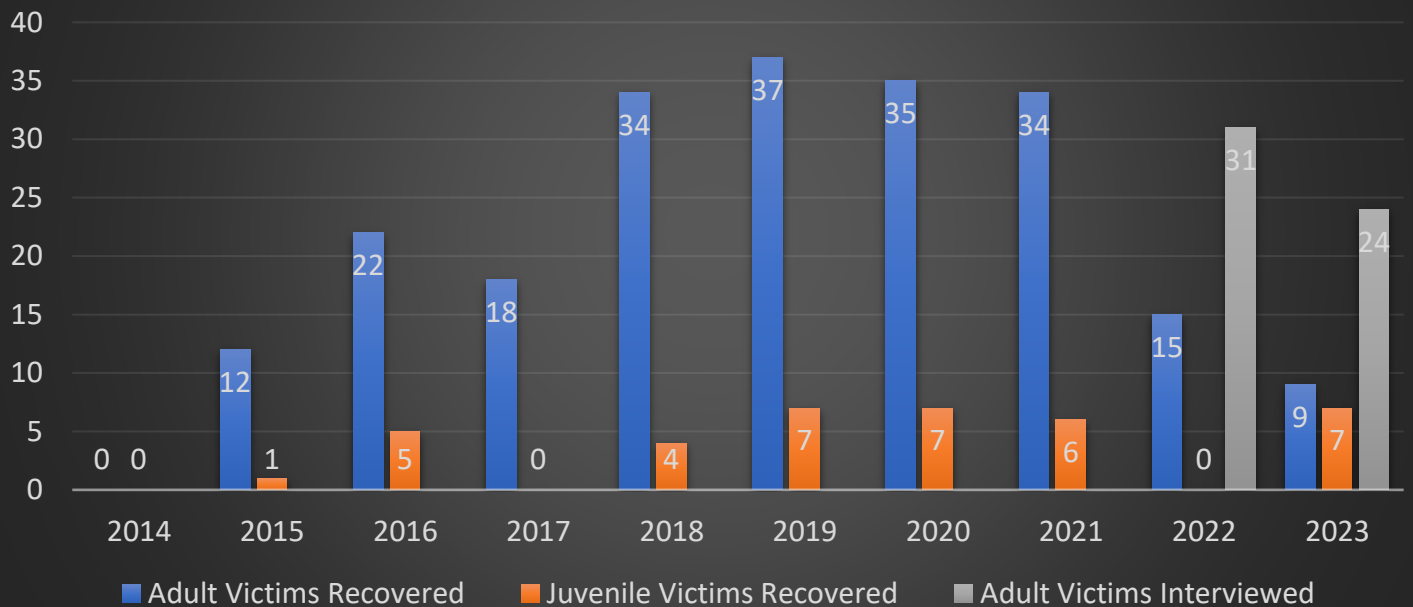
Montana Division of Criminal Investigation Human Trafficking Unit



*\* 5 of these cases for '23 were Labor trafficking*



# Montana Human Trafficking Victims Recovered



Total Number of Cases Submitted for Prosecution in 2023: 35 (33-State / 2-Federal)

Total Number of Arrests in 2023: 30

In 2023, the DCI Human Trafficking Unit (HTU) prioritized targeting the primary drivers of the commercial sex trade industry: the buyers. The implementation of new legislation, which classified patronizing commercial sex as a felony, facilitated this focus. Consequently, the 2-agent unit collaborated with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Homeland Security Investigation to apprehend 30 individuals seeking sex with either adults or children.

The Human Trafficking Unit (HTU) spearheaded various investigations aimed at identifying and rescuing victims of commercial sex trafficking and labor trafficking. These efforts also involved dismantling the trafficking organizations behind these heinous crimes. While these investigations demanded significant time and dedication, they often yielded impactful results. Throughout the year, multiple convictions underscored this, including cases such as Cecil Hatchett from California and Ashley Stella from Nevada. Both individuals were sentenced to 5 and 8 years, respectively, in federal prison for transporting a minor into Montana for commercial sex purposes.

The HTU currently consists of two Agents and a Supervisory Agent. The Agents are stationed in Billings and Bozeman, while the Supervisor is based in Helena. Moreover, plans are underway to onboard a Victim Service Specialist by March 2024.

The HTU receives complaints of human trafficking incidents nearly every day and dedicates time to vetting and investigating these reports. However, not all complaints lead to the opening of a case. Agents meticulously corroborate and vet the information, sometimes necessitating additional details over time before initiating a case.

Recently, the HTU has experienced a surge in labor trafficking cases, which demand extensive investigation efforts. These cases have been collaboratively pursued with the FBI and HSI. Notably, one case was initiated in December 2023 and has subsequently been accepted by the US Attorney's office.

Building upon last year's initiatives, the HTU has planned several proactive operations in the upcoming days and months

statewide to combat sex buyers targeting both adults and children. These efforts aim to result in multiple arrests under the new solicitation of prostitution statute, bolstering deterrence against the buyers of commercial sex in Montana.

Furthermore, the HTU faces a growing influx of requests for education and awareness, both from Montana law enforcement and the public. The Supervisor typically conducts these presentations, which have escalated to several types per month.

#### Quarterly Stats Oct 1, 2023 to Dec 31, 2023

Cases Officially Opened: 4

-2 Federal Cases

-2 State Cases

\*Note that all state cases have the potential of becoming federal should evidence support.

Assists and Preliminary Investigations: 20

#### 2024 Year to date Stats

Cases Opened: 2

-1 Federal Case

-1 State Case

Assists and Preliminary Investigations: 23

#### Recent Trials / Adjudicated Cases:

- Mark Baker was tried and found guilty in September of 2023 for Solicitation of a Minor for Sex. He was subsequently found guilty and in February of 2024 was sentenced to 10 years in Federal Prison for this crime.
- Mark Albrecht was tried and convicted in February of 2023 for the Use of Facility in Interstate Commerce in Aid of Racketeering and Making False Statements. Albrecht faces a maximum of 5 years in Federal prison, a \$250,000 fine and 3 years of supervised release.