

Title: Connecticut's First Civil Rights Conference (Deadline 3)
Byline: Tebben Lopez

Child prostitutes serve [anywhere from](#) two to 30 clients a week. They have 100 to 1500 clients a year.

Special agent Rod Khattabi of the Department of Homeland Security stood at the podium in the Grand Courtroom of Quinnipiac University's School of Law building, grimly [reporting](#) the facts.

He was just one of the panel of speakers at Connecticut's first comprehensive civil rights conference yesterday. Gov. Dan Malloy, Sheriff David O'Malley and Dennis Shepard also [spoke at the high-level meeting](#), in front of the 275 attendees.

[The conference covered an array of what Fein \(who?\) deemed some of the most pressing civil rights issues of our time. Specialists also spoke about disabilities, voting rights, fair housing, bullying, excessive force, and veterans' rights.](#)

[What does this mean?](#)

[Maybe:](#)

[The Civil Rights Division of the U.S. government is ready to crack down on cases like childhood prostitution. "Unfortunately, there's a lot of \[it\]," said Assistant Attorney General Thomas Perez, head of the division, tiold the Hamden conference on \(date\).](#)

Khattabi knows this all too well. He, along with Assistant U.S. Attorney, Krishna Patel both worked on the [case of](#) Douglas Perlitz, [the prominent Fairfield University alumni who pleaded guilty last year to charges stelling from a school he set up in Haiti as a front for sex tourism and child abuse from 1999 to 2008.](#)

Six of Perlitz's victims came to the states to testify against him during the trial. Danelle Ragoonanan-Storph worked with them. She was impressed by their courage.

Storph is the director of Project Rescue, which was established in 2000 in tandem with the Victim Protection Act. Their goal is to provide holistic care for human trafficking victims. "We want them to know they're not just an accessory to building a case," she said [at the conference](#).

Since its formation, Project Rescue had helped 30 victims of 10 different nationalities. But Storph said they are only a "drop in the bucket." She suspects there are many more incidents. The challenge is identifying cases.

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[Either indent or don't!](#)Victims feel threatened and don't come forward. "It's hard to know how much trafficking is in Connecticut," said Storph.

Brad Myles, executive director of Polaris Project, agrees that it is difficult to isolate the problem. "Trafficking is embedded in all these different societies," he said.

The Obama administration charged the Polaris Project with setting up a human trafficking hotline to try and combat the crime. They now get around 50 calls a day. They have received 157 calls from Connecticut. "This issue is big and it's real," said Myles.

The Civil Rights Division set and broke their record for prosecuted human trafficking cases last year according to Perez.

[Far too confusing. Slowly tell us about shepard and his dad. Invest some time so we understand](#) "Good is coming out of evil," said a voiceover of Shepard, in a visual presentation about his son, Matthew Shepard who was murdered in a hate crime in 1998 and one of the namesakes of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crime Prevention Act that was signed in 2009.

But Shepard doesn't see an end to the fight just yet. "Most of the kids today have no idea who Matt is," he said.

Shepard stressed that making young people aware is important because "they take their rights for granted."

Reflection for Deadline 3

Civil Rights Conference

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My goal for the piece was to like Fairfield to the conference. I thought that it was an important event regardless, but for readers to be interested I knew I had to associate them to it somehow. I wanted them to feel a little restless and maybe uneasy. It surprised me that there are so many cases of human trafficking and although the conference covered a lot of topics, I felt that because of the Perlitz connection that I should focus on that.

This is the first version of the story so there haven't been any changes yet. But I hope to make it better.

I went through the notes we've been taking on everything in the book. The short paragraphs, the backing up of the lead, and the short lead itself. Also keeping focused.

This story was different from others because it wasn't a Fairfield campus event. So I had to find an angle to link it to Fairfield, rather than having the connection already established. I got to sit in on a press conference with the US Assistant Attorney General and the head US Attorney for Connecticut. It was very cool to see that.

This time I came into the conference with an idea that I was going to work from the Perlitz angle. So instead of taking all the information down, I wrote only what I

thought was relevant (and then some, but not as much as I would have). As always, I feel like I can improve the whole of my writing, but hopefully I've kept the focus.

I wasn't sure how to come into the lead. I didn't want to put Perlitz in it, because that wasn't really what the story was about, it was just the peg to get Fairfield students interested. I also didn't know how much information to give about Perlitz or Shepard. It was tough to judge how much people might know about them

Wow, Tebben, I'm impressed by uyouy even tryin to do a story as complex and

powerful./ this wiouldbe hard for a seasoned pro to handle right. There is SO much here.

Part of me wants you to reduce the scope. But I actually like your handling of the enormity of it

Consider the suggested cvhanegs. Read 3-4 muirror stories about perlitz and be sure u are describing his cvriem and gullty plea correecvtly. Then rewrite and send to muirror news ed charlotte Adinolfi at her student address.

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+5 degree of difficulty

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