



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **AAHOA Statement on National Human Trafficking Awareness Day**

ATLANTA, Ga., Jan. 11 – AAHOA President and CEO Cecil Staton and AAHOA Chairman Biran Patel issued the following statement regarding National Human Trafficking Awareness Day:

“This year, National Human Trafficking Awareness Day takes on a greater urgency because of the disturbing increase in labor and sex trafficking that’s been observed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic’s economic fallout is providing traffickers with more opportunities to exploit the most vulnerable in our society. That’s why America’s hotel owners stand vigilant against trafficking not just today, but every day.

“Hotel owners and their employees are in a position to make a real difference in stopping this despicable crime - but only if they know what signs to look for and how to respond. Proper training can be the difference between life and death for a trafficking victim. AAHOA continues to make great strides in the fight against trafficking through our educational offerings and outreach to hotel owners and their employees. Since 2017, AAHOA’s extensive education and awareness campaigns resulted in thousands of hospitality workers completing AAHOA’s Human Trafficking Awareness Trainings (HTAT). We developed these free, online, and on-demand trainings with Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking and Polaris, two leaders in the fight against human trafficking. AAHOA remains committed to empowering hotel owners and hospitality professionals to help keep trafficking out of their hotels and their communities.”

### **About AAHOA:**

*AAHOA is the largest hotel owners association in the world. The over 19,500 AAHOA members represent almost one in every two hotels in the United States. With billions of dollars in property assets and hundreds of thousands of employees, AAHOA members are core economic contributors in virtually every community. AAHOA is a proud defender of free enterprise and the foremost current-day example of realizing the American dream.*

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