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The real problem with inflated numbers for trafficking victims is that they create pressure for a quick policy fix. But human trafficking is intertwined with larger issues of immigration policy, poverty reduction, access to education, workers' rights (on farms, in restaurants and as domestic help), women's rights, and official corruption. Rather than tackle this briar patch, the tendency has been to call it all "sex trafficking" and stage splashy raids on brothels.

Such "rescues" not only fail to stop human trafficking, they also sweep up and demonize sex workers who have entered the trade on their own, driving them underground and closing off the opportunity to recruit them as allies against trafficking.

SAPNA PATEL

Staff Attorney

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