

Pornographic Super Bowl 'Specials' Hit Craigslist

The NFL Super Bowl is happening Sunday, causing an influx of sex-trafficking victims in the host city. As a result, there has been an increase in online advertisements for prostituted women on the Craigslist and Backpage websites for the New York/New Jersey area.

In a quick search of Craigslist, Dawn Hawkins, executive director at Morality in Media, found more than 1,980 new ads selling prostituted women already posted before 10 a.m.; the majority of these ads used pornographic images of each woman to sell sex. These ads were touted as Super Bowl specials, many claiming the woman or girl was new and "just in town for the weekend." Despite Craigslist's claims to have taken this type of ad down, it is apparent they are not adhering to their policies.

In a congressional briefing Monday, lawmakers addressed the issue of sex trafficking as a specific result of the Super Bowl. They called on local and federal law enforcement as well as hospitality workers to be aware of the signs and how to take action.

"The links between pornography and sex trafficking are clear," Hawkins says. "Not only is pornography creating demand, it is also how the pimps market their victims. We are grateful that law enforcement is monitoring the situation, but that only helps on one side, when it's too late. We need to educate people to stop the demand for this sexual exploitation."

Pornography drives the demand for prostituted women, propelling the global sex-trafficking trade into mainstream society. Trafficking victims are also used in the production of pornography, as performers often suffer violence and

coercion to carry out acts they do not consent to.