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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Defendant Convicted in First Trafficking Offense Prosecuted by Newly Created Dallas County DA's Office Human Trafficking Unit

(Dallas, Texas) — Dallas County Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot announced today, Karen Goana Villegas, 33, has been convicted in the first trafficking offense prosecuted by the newly created Human Trafficking Unit of the Dallas County District Attorney's Office.

"This conviction is a powerful example of why we created the Human Trafficking Unit," said District Attorney John Creuzot. "These cases are complex and deeply traumatic, and they demand focused, specialized attention. I'm incredibly proud of the work our team has done to hold this defendant accountable and to support the survivor throughout this process."

Ms. Gaona Villegas was found guilty of Compelling Prostitution of a Child Under 18 Years old, and a Dallas County jury sentenced her to 25 years in prison.

Case Background

For several years, Ms. Gaona Villegas, trafficked and prostituted her 14-year-old stepdaughter with adult men. Capitalizing on the defendant's close maternal connection with the child, she emotionally coerced and manipulated the victim using tactics commonly found in familial trafficking, like burdening the child with the family finances to ensure the victim's obedience. This included driving the victim to the homes of multiple men, who would then pay the defendant in money and drugs to sexually assault the child. The defendant also made her home available to men so they could sexually assault the victim. This was discovered when the victim's younger brother bravely outcried to a school counselor.

In addition to the fortitude of this victim, the case relied heavily on expert testimony from Dallas Police Department's trafficking expert, Detective Jeff Grandy, and expert therapy testimony from Holly Dotson, with the Dallas Children's Advocacy Center. Both Detective Grandy and Ms. Dotson were able to provide crucial insight into the dark realm of familial trafficking.

Traffick911 also served as vigorous advocates for the victim, her brother, and her mother. Genesis Pathak was the victim's Traffick911 advocate and she functioned as a pillar of unshakeable support to the child through the considerable time it took to go to trial. During the week of trial, the Traffick911 team further championed the family by being present each day to demonstrate their steadfast support to the victim and her family during this very stressful and taxing process.

ADAs Aryanna Bradford, Soni Lewis, Chief of the Human Trafficking Unit, ADA Summer Elmazi, Chief of the Crimes Against Children Division alongside Investigators Raphael Vela, Walter Clifton Jr., Natarsha Price, Victim Advocates Nathaly Mendez and Roquel Mayhorn, the Dallas Police Department, the Dallas Children's Advocacy Center, the Traffick 911 Team, worked cohesively to seek justice on behalf of the victim.

"This case shows the impact of having experienced prosecutors, investigators, and victim advocates working together. I commend our entire team for their commitment and professionalism in pursuing justice in such a difficult case," remarked DA Creuzot.

About the Human Trafficking Unit

The dedicated Human Trafficking Unit of the Dallas County District Attorney's Office was launched in January 2025 under the leadership DA John Creuzot. This effort is made possible through a \$207,520 grant from the Office of the Governor that funds a specialized prosecutor who focuses solely on adult and child human trafficking cases. The team consists of a prosecutor, an investigator, and a victim advocate, creating a multidisciplinary approach designed to improve the prosecution of human trafficking crimes and provide critical support for survivors.