

WSB-TV Atlanta

Lawmakers take 'Unholy Tour' through city's prostitution hot spots

- Updated: Mar 2, 2016 - 10:50 PM



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DEKALB COUNTY, Ga. —

Community activists and local lawmakers got an eye opening tour of metro Atlanta's sex trafficking hot spots Wednesday night.

Organizers hoped to motivate those on board to take steps they say will save lives.

Channel 2 investigative reporter Aaron Diamant was with the group as that bus rolled through some of metro Atlanta's roughest neighborhoods over the course of two hours.

DeKalb County police officers among others were on board as those lawmakers got an eyeful.

Former strip club dancer turned minister Kasey McClure was behind the bus tour.

"So many people have turned a blind eye and just say it's not happening in our community, but it really is happening," McClure said.

So much so, Georgia Public Service Commissioner Tim Echols asked McClure and her team at 4sarah to take the group of lawmakers and community leaders on a so-called "unholy tour" of prostitution and sex-trade hot spots in DeKalb and Fulton counties.

"In my heart I felt like, you know, this is something I could do, and I need to let people see that this is a blight on our state and our city," Echols told Diamant.

Channel 2 Action News joined the same tour last year. Within days of our story, one local woman, who didn't want to be identified, called the 4sarah hotline for help finding her missing granddaughter.

"I feel like a higher power led me to watch that," the woman said at the time.

Using the granddaughter's picture, intervention coordinator Anne Bailey found the 14-year-old on Backpage.com in an ad that listed her at 22. Police eventually rescued the girl and a friend.

"We're hoping that tonight, you know, we can get some of the same results, because these girls need help," Bailey said.

On Wednesday night's tour, freshman state Rep. Doreen Carter of Lithonia was on board.

"It's heartbreaking. I'm a mom, and this is my community. This is where I grew up, and to see," Carter told Diamant, saying she had no idea things had gotten so bad.

The troubling scenes are now motivating Carter to search for solutions.

"This definitely has touched me," Carter told Diamant.

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