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For Immediate Release

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MEDIA ADVISORY **FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER TIM ECHOLS** **Echols to Host “Unholy Tour” January 17, 2017**

ATLANTA – January 9, 2017 - Public Service Commissioner Tim Echols will host an “Unholy Tour” of Atlanta on Tuesday January 17, 2017 to tour areas susceptible to human trafficking and the sex trade. The tour will depart from the Coverdell Legislative Office Building on Mitchell Street in Atlanta at 6:00 p.m., and will return at approximately 8:30 p.m. The buses will begin loading at 5:30 p.m. The media is invited to ride along but space is extremely limited and seats will be reserved on a first come first served basis, so please contact Bethany Walker at bwalker@psc.state.ga.us or 404-656-4515 by 5 p.m. on January 12, 2016 to confirm attendance. If you wish to follow the bus in your own vehicle you are welcome to do so. Participants will be available for interviews.

President Barack Obama has proclaimed January 2017 as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month in the United States, calling upon businesses, national and community organizations, families, and all Americans to recognize the vital role we must play in ending all forms of human trafficking.

Joining the tour this year are two nationally and internationally acclaimed speakers, Dr. Laura J. Lederer, President of Global Centurion, and Jessica Neely. Dr. Lederer is a researcher on the health and psychological effects of trafficking and using them to identify victims. Dr. Lederer’s biography is found at <http://www.globalcenturion.org/about/board-of-directors/>. Jessica Neely was once a prominent adult film star but is now speaking out on the truth behind the industry. Her story is available at <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/top-googled-porn-star-exits-industry-reveals-shocking-truth-about-life-on-t>.

On a global scale, human trafficking, also known as “modern day slavery,” is the second largest criminal enterprise after drug trafficking. The number of victims today (28 million) far surpasses the number of victims of the transatlantic slave trade (~15 million). Atlanta is ranked among the top cities for commercial sexual exploitation of children in the United States. The booming sex trade in Atlanta is intrinsically tied to the abominable act of human trafficking occurring in our nation.

In 2015, Public Service Commissioner Tim Echols organized the first Unholy Tours. As a result of the media coverage of the Unholy Tours, two teenage girls were rescued from a trafficker through cooperation between 4Sarah (charitable organization) and DeKalb County Special Victims

Unit. In 2016, he took the tour to Savannah to highlight the human trafficking problem along Georgia's coastal region.

Kasey McClure from the 4Sarah organization will be the tour guide showing the realities of the sex trade in the metro Atlanta area from the safety of the charter bus. 4Sarah's mission is to provide outreach to women who are still in "the life" and to coordinate with other organizations to provide support and counseling to those who have gotten out.

Members of the law enforcement community and the General Assembly will join the tour.

Commissioner Echols is in his second term on the Georgia Public Service Commission, having been re-elected statewide in November 2016. You can find his complete biography and photo on the Commission web site at <http://www.psc.state.ga.us/pscinfo/bios/echols.asp?tab=Tab2>.

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