Slavery in the form of manicurists is particularly difficult to eradicate for a number of reasons. First, this form of trafficking places the enslaved people in plain sight making them difficult to identify. There are many nail salons across the country run chiefly but Vietnamese immigrants. Because of this abundance, picking out specific sites where human trafficking exists has proved difficult. Immigration lawyer Julie Dahlstrom points out, “There is a reluctance to believe that this is happening in our communities and I’d say especially in affluent communities” (Martin “Nail Salons”). Because of this disinclination to think of your nail technician as anything but, many victims of slavery could be overlooked. Additionally, human trafficking victims have trouble advocating for themselves. In many of these cases, the victims are immigrants and their only contacts in the country are those that enslave them causing them to be very dependent.

 Contrarily, the nail salon business provides a good cover for the types of labor these women are forced into. Paul Taylor, an inspector for the Division of Professional Licensure has been investigating the connections between nail salons and human trafficking. He points out that nail salons are for the most part a cash business, allowing ease in laundering money and fraudulent business practice (Martin “Nail Salons”). Many cases show not just forced labor as a manicurist but also in sex work. The old cover for prostitution in many parts of the US was a massage parlor. Now that this sham has been brought to light, prostitution covers have moved to nails salons.

 In order to abolish this form of human trafficking, one important course of action comes from the Division of Professional Licensure. The first red flag that a nail salon maybe be involved in illicit activity comes from licenses that are often in violation and often cited. In Dorchester, MA, the finding of bad licenses led to an investigation that eventually charged five people with conspiracy to smuggle women into the country for the purpose of sex work (Martin “Sexual and Human Trafficking”). By keeping close track of licensed nail salons, law enforcement could have a better idea of what establishments are supporting human trafficking.

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