

## Ethicast: A Conversation with Human Rights Advocate Cindy McCain



Cindy Hensley McCain has dedicated her life to improving the lives of those less fortunate both in the United States and around the world. Cindy serves as co-chair of the Arizona Governor’s Council on human trafficking and on the McCain Institute’s Human Trafficking Advisory Council. She is dedicated to efforts to reduce human trafficking in Arizona, throughout the United States and around the world, as well as working to improve the lives of victims of human trafficking. Through her work with the McCain Institute, several partnerships have been formed with anti-trafficking organizations working on solving various aspects of the problem. Cindy is the Chairman of her family’s business, Hensley Beverage Company, which is one of the largest Anheuser-Busch distributors in the nation. Cindy resides in Phoenix with her husband, U.S. Senator John McCain.

Here’s a full transcript of our recent Ethicast with Cindy McCain and KPMG’s Stephen L. Brown.

**Stephen L. Brown:** Welcome to another series of Ethisphere’s Ethicast, an informative and candid speaker series that explores and examines best practices employed by thought leaders to the world of ethics. I’m your guest host, Stephen L. Brown, Senior Advisor at KPMG Board Leadership Center.

Following day two’s opening keynote session at Ethisphere’s ninth Annual Global Ethics Summit on Advancing Human Rights: The Corporate Impact on Societal Integrity and Protecting the Value of People, which I was fortunate to moderate a panel of industry experts, I managed to catch up with Cindy McCain, co-chair Arizona Governor's Council on human trafficking, member of the McCain Institute's Human Trafficking Advisory Council.

In this podcast, Cindy and I talk about how companies can have a positive impact on the efforts to combat human rights concerns and how the McCain Institute acts as a convener to various industries to educate them on how trafficking touches their work. With that, let’s listen in.

Thank you very much for joining us, and on behalf of Ethisphere and my firm, the KPMG Board Leadership Center, thank you to Cindy McCain.

**Cindy McCain:** Thank you. Thanks. I’m honored to be here, and I look forward to a great conversation.

**Stephen L. Brown:** For our listener who may not be familiar with the McCain Institute, can you give us a brief overview of the institute and your involvement?

**Cindy McCain:** The McCain Institute is an action-based organization. We're based in Washington, D.C., but we are affiliated with Arizona State University. Primarily, what we work on is, of course, the issues that are very

important to my husband, which is national security, form policy, our next generation leaders from around the world, and my portion of the institute has to do with humanitarian issues, primarily that of human trafficking. We work in conjunction. We're not an institute that produces flypapers. We are action-based, and we seek and get results from the work that we do.

**Stephen L. Brown:** Excellent, and indeed. My understanding is that the institute acts as a convener to various industries and to educate them in looking for action. One of those issues, extremely important issues is human trafficking, and to educate industries of how human trafficking touches their work.

**Cindy McCain:** Part of the convener aspect of the institute is to make sure that we include as many people from all walks of life, from all companies, from all organizations, et cetera, and we convene them in conversation series, and we focus primarily on educating the audience on how human trafficking can be intertwined to their work and also, how this cross-dress with foster care, public health, sports, and other aspects of daily community life around the world.

**Stephen L. Brown:** You're affiliated with Arizona State University and you live in Arizona? Your husband is the senior senator from Arizona? Is there any particular aspect about the state of Arizona that makes this issue of human trafficking so dearly important to have a grasp and a great handle on?

**Cindy McCain:** When we began this area of the institute, which is the quest to stop human trafficking, we didn't feel like we could do anything internationally, unless we had our own house in order. By that, I mean certainly the state of Arizona and the rest of the continent of United States as well as Hawaii and Alaska.

Human trafficking is not a foreign issue. It is a foreign issue, but it's very much a domestic issue. We estimate the numbers being upwards of

350,000 kids, minors that are trafficked every year domestically within the borders of the United States of America. This is an epidemic, and it's also something that we thought that we had to be a part of the policy making and how we can work on the statutes of the various laws within states and most importantly, in the state of Arizona.

Since we have begun this, Arizona has become a leader on this issue, I am very proud to say, and we continue to make changes and strides in controlling and stopping this terrible scourge of human trafficking. Most recently, and this happened literally yesterday, the governor signed into law a bill that the McCain Institute was part of drafting and helping out with, and that is to remove the word "prostitute" as it applies to a child.

The word "prostitute" in my opinion is a generic word, should never be applied to a child, and I'm grateful to say that the legislature of Arizona

thought the same thing and passed it into law. There's a lot of things that we've been working on in terms of domestically before we begin our interest and our movement offshore on this issue.

**Stephen L. Brown:** Understood, and we here at the KPMG Board Leadership Center are focused on helping boards be more effective, and one of the issues that we focus on are the role of business in human rights. There is a feeling in a lot of work that we've done, and last year, we did a report on addressing human rights where we went and interviewed our clients and other businesses about different issues with human rights.

One of the feelings is that human rights may be a big blind spot for businesses because they may be unaware how to stop it. A couple years ago at the Sedona Forum, which I believe you were preparing for the 2017 Sedona Forum right now.

**Cindy McCain:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Stephen L. Brown:** You were quoted in saying, "All of you have seen human trafficking. You just don't know what you're looking at." Can you discuss the awareness issue and the need to train leaders how to spot these issues from your perspective as a member of the McCain Institute, and the work that you've done, and also, your perspective as a COO of a large private company, and in the need for you to have a new experience in training your own employees to help spot this issue?

**Cindy McCain:** When I made that statement, that is exactly as I see it and exactly how I feel the lack of awareness resonates through companies. What we're trying to do in the beginning of all this is help educate companies on the awareness of human trafficking, what to look for, what to do if you see it, how to spot it. All the kinds of things that you would want anyone in your

community to do, but we take that further clearly because we talk about supply chains. We talk about management of people. We talk about workers.

All the things that are very much in the daily life in running companies across the United States, but that human trafficking is very prolific, and I'll use the example, which is a very obvious example certainly out West is our farmers and particularly our lettuce, et cetera. The fruits and vegetables, lettuce, et cetera. A lot of those workers, in fact, most of those workers are coming in from Mexico.

Whether or not they are trafficked in or hired in a legal fashion becomes an issue, and the issue is not immigration. The issue is human rights. Have these people been trafficked in at great risk, at great harm to them personally to then pick ... take care of the fruits, fruit and vegetable crops at a lower cost for our businesses?

It becomes a dilemma in my opinion and a question that companies have to ask themselves. How much is worth harming a human life whether you know it or not? Most people would say, "Well, of course, we don't want to harm a human life ever in this." That's why it is imperative that companies educate themselves, become aware of every aspect of their company, and this includes white-collar companies as well in investments, et cetera, and follow, follow it directly and exactly from start to finish as to where and how the supply chain is operated, et cetera, or how, and why, and where the money is invested.

It's a very complicated issue, but it is also one that I believe companies are beginning to take great strides in and are also beginning to educate not only their management level, but the general population of the company, which is extremely important.

**Stephen L. Brown:** Indeed, indeed. I believe in talking with members of your staff, we talked about your own experience in a distribution company where your training for different people inside the company may be different.

**Cindy McCain:** Right.

**Stephen L. Brown:** Your truckers, the type of training you give them may be different from those who are in sales.

**Cindy McCain:** Right.

**Stephen L. Brown:** Can you talk about that a little bit, that differentiation?

**Cindy McCain:** In my own company, we are a beer and wine distributor in Arizona, and what ... You were exactly right. Our truckers have a different awareness level, and I don't mean more or less. I mean, a different kind of awareness. They're on the road. They're in truck stops. They're in the backs of convenience stores. All those kinds of things, so what they're looking for although is the same to a great degree, it's also very different, and how you handle it is very different.

Now, take it to our sales guys who actually go on premise into bars, restaurants, et cetera, and what they are trained to look for and what to do if they see it. My own son who works for me as well has seen it more than once in bars and has done the correct thing, and that is call the hotline, the human trafficking hotline, but it is. It's a different kind of awareness, and it's a different kind of training. Although, we're all trained for the same thing, and that is to stop human trafficking.

**Stephen L. Brown:** Moving along and thinking about how the bad guys, the traffickers operate their business, we know that they are getting smarter. They're getting more efficient with their tactics for trafficking as technology continue to advance. How do we get ahead of this?

**Cindy McCain:** Oh my gosh. You were so right on that. These bad guys, these traffickers, they are ... It's organized crime. Make no mistake when we talk about human trafficking. It is organized crime. People are moved with guns, with drugs. The business model for trafficking a human being is much darker because you can traffic guns and drugs once. You can traffic a human being over, and over, and over again.

In all of this, you were exactly right when you say they're becoming more sophisticated. The kinds of things they're using, the internet, the digital aspects, their ability to be able to mask what they're doing, et cetera, is very sophisticated, but there are organizations, I'm happy to say, within the United States. One of those is Thorn.

Thorn is a nonprofit that works on the digital aspect of human trafficking. This includes not just folks who are literally coming over the border or coming ... or little girls, little boys who are being moved around the

country, but it's also the dark web. They have a spotlight tool that helps our first responders with facial recognition, with the ability to be able to not just track phone numbers, but figure out where the phone number was last or the address was. Is it the same person? She was seen last in Idaho now to New Mexico. It's been a great advantage for our first responders to be able to use this tool in helping to find these kids and rescue them if they see them.

Once again, what you say. As soon as we make two steps forward, the traffickers make five steps forward, and so it is up to us to continue to

become more sophisticated in how we start to help stop all of this, and it's a different grime stuff. It really is.

**Stephen L. Brown:** Indeed. That's why those on the frontline businesses who have employees on the frontline, so it's their truckers and drivers, or flight attendants, or in the hospitality and tourism, hotel staff to be trained. In order for that to happen, the executives must understand that this is imperative and that they understand the issues and build into their risk management operations and models a way to combat this.

I think one of the ways of getting that awareness is pulling together multiple stakeholders and put them in a room so they can understand these issues in a risk manager executive who's looking at risk from a standpoint for the last 20 years that does not have human trafficking in that model can hear these stories. Can you talk a little bit about how the McCain Institute has brought together and engaged multiple stakeholders on these issues both locally and abroad?

**Cindy McCain:** Yes. The McCain Institute has been very active in convening, and we do bring together multiple kinds of stakeholders in the arena of human trafficking and helped not only to educate and bring awareness, but guide and help along the way in any way we can. We are an open-source institute, so everything that we have and everything that we do is open-source. There's access to it by anybody.

In my opinion, what's been lacking in the arena of human trafficking has been the data aspect, which is what companies and folks within the

arena need to really make sure that they're heading the right direction or, "Is this the correct path? Could we be doing it differently? Shall we be

doing it another way?" That's where the McCain Institute comes to play in all of this.

Our goal is to hopefully engage as many stakeholders as possible in the training, and awareness, and action-based portion of this, and also, make sure that ... Like I said, if there's any help we can give them, we will. Again, our website speaks for itself because it's completely open-source.

**Stephen L. Brown:** With the McCain Institute in regards to anti-trafficking, what have been some of the big accomplishments that institute has seen regarding this issue?

**Cindy McCain:** Oh gosh. We've been so fortunate because, like I said, the state that we began in the state of Arizona, and we have managed to not only pass initial legislation on human trafficking, which Arizona started from ground zero. We had nothing. We had absolutely nothing on human trafficking, and we now leave the nation in the kinds of legislation that we passed, the victims, services, portion of it, et cetera. Not only that, but training our first responders.

Now, our first responders train people around the country, so that portion of this I'm very proud of and happy to say, but also, again, nationally, we bring together our symposiums around the country, our speakers that speaks specifically to the issue or generically with regards to the human rights aspect as well.

We are also now engaging in beginning stages of labor trafficking, which is an area that as you know has been very ... It's overwhelming to me. It's something I can't even get my arms around yet. Primarily, what we're going to be focusing on is the prosecution of traffickers. There's many, many people in the arena that are helping to rescue, to stop, et cetera where we felt we could vest it in is helping and beginning the process of being able to train our prosecutors, help make sure that people along the borders understand the issue, and when these guys are arrested that we actually put them in jail for a long time, and so encouraging other states to change their legislation, their laws.

All the things that it takes, and it's literally a step-by-step process. I'm happy to say that most states in the United States are very willing to be a part of this, and that's in large part because we've been able to encourage them along the way.

**Stephen L. Brown:** You've certainly have had in that the institute and in the state of Arizona some very good progress, great success here. Where do you think some of the biggest holes lie in this fight against trafficking?

**Cindy McCain:** Data is one of them. That's where we're trying to help in this. Along with Arizona State University, we've produced some significant and important data with regards to human trafficking, but we have a long way to go. Quite frankly, there are still laws on the books in many states that criminalize children if they're picked up, and generally, these kids are picked up by police.

Instead of being treated as victims, they're treated as criminals, and that couldn't be further from the truth, so changing the hearts and minds is a large part of this and making sure that when we hear of something, especially in another state, we gently suggest maybe we could do it a different way. These kids really are not criminals. They're victims. In large part and probably the most significant in all of this are victim services across the country. We're lacking in such a desperate way in the victim services arena that we just have so far to go on that.

**Stephen L. Brown:** This has been a great conversation. I appreciate the time that you've given us on this, and I have one last question, which I'd be remiss if I didn't ask you something that is somewhat political given that you may know something about politics.

**Cindy McCain:** Yeah.

**Stephen L. Brown:** We live in, obviously, very interesting times and polarizing geopolitical climate. What needs to happen to ensure that human rights and human trafficking is not lost among the leading agendas that are out there among governments, businesses, and communities?

**Cindy McCain:** Number one, and I'm speaking from the institute standpoint, keep the fire turned up. If there's one thing I've been accused of is being tenacious on this issue and I'll wear that well. It is one thing. I'm not going to let the administration forget about this. It simply won't happen. This is too important. It's too important for our children, and it's too important for this country. We believe in what's right. We live by it. We make our mistakes, but we are a truly dignified country when it comes to treating people generally with regards to what's correct in human rights, so we need to lead on this issue worldwide, and we can't do it unless we have our own house in order.



My intention and I know the intention of many other people that work in this arena across the country is to keep the heat turned up. We've already talked to the Trump administration about this issue. They, I believe, are going to be very engaged on it. I have no reason to believe otherwise, and so I look forward to great progress in this area with this administration and hopefully future administrations as well.

**Stephen L. Brown:** I think that is one of the great lines in this conversation, "Have your own house in order," and I believe that stands not simply for local incredible

governments, but for businesses who are in some respects ... in great respects at the forefront of this, and that's one of the questions that business leaders need to ask. "Do we have our house in order on this issue, and how does human trafficking affect our business?" That's a question which may not be readily understood, and that's the additional homework for executives to do to become familiar with how to spot these issues and see where they touch this issue. I really appreciate, Ms. McCain, your time that you've given us.

**Cindy McCain:** Thank you.

**Stephen L. Brown:** I'm going to let you have the last word.

**Cindy McCain:** I appreciate you giving me the time on this issue. I appreciate when anybody gives anybody who works in the arena time on this issue because it is a continued conversation, and with the reminder that human trafficking is a basic human right violation. It is organized crime, and it is something that we as Americans must no longer tolerate in any way, shape, or form. I look forward to working with businesses, people. Whoever wants to work on this issue, I'm willing to work with you and see if we can clean this up.

**Stephen L. Brown:** Cindy, thank you very much for being on Ethicast today. It was a pleasure speaking with you and learning about how the McCain Institute is working to combat human trafficking. I'm sure your talk today will leave many inspired and will help move the needle on this issue.

**Cindy McCain:** Stephen, thank you for having me, and I appreciate you taking your time.

**Stephen L. Brown:** Again, everyone, that was Cindy McCain, co-chair Arizona Governor's Council on human trafficking and a member of the McCain Institute's Human Trafficking Advisory Council. The keynote session at Ethisphere's ninth Annual Global Ethics Summit, which featured Stanley M. Bergman, Chairman of the Board and CEO of Henry Schein, Inc. and Caroline Rees,



President and Co-Founder of Shift, is now available. Check it out at [youtube.com/ethisphere](https://youtube.com/ethisphere). I'm Stephen L. Brown, Senior Advisor at KPMG Board Leadership Center. Thank you for joining us.