

**FBI PUBLIC AFFAIRS – DIRECTOR’S AM NEWS BRIEFING**

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2019 5:00 AM EST

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**Judge: Acosta Broke Law By Hiding Epstein Plea Deal From Underage Girls He Trafficked.** The [Miami Herald](#) (2/21, Brown, 794K) reports that U.S. District Judge Kenneth A. Marra has ruled that "federal prosecutors – among them, US Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta – broke federal law when they signed a plea agreement with" Jeffrey Epstein, "a wealthy, politically connected sex trafficker and concealed it from more than 30 of his underage victims." Marra "said that the evidence he reviewed showed that...Epstein had been operating an international sex operation in which he and others recruited underage girls – not only in Florida – but from overseas, in violation of federal law." The Herald says that "instead of prosecuting Epstein under federal sex trafficking laws, Acosta, then the US attorney in Miami, helped negotiate a non-prosecution agreement that gave Epstein and his co-conspirators immunity from federal prosecution." The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Mazzei, 17.89M) says "the court's ruling on Thursday could nullify the non-prosecution agreement and subject Mr. Epstein and any co-conspirators in the case to new federal charges, said Jack Scarola, a lawyer for the two victims who challenged the agreement."

[NBC Nightly News](#) (2/21, story 5, 1:20, Williams, 9.56M) reported "the judge did not rule on whether the plea deal itself was improper and the ruling is not likely to have any effect on Epstein. The judge is asking both sides in the case to suggest what should be done as a result of the ruling." NBC added that "as for Acosta, the Labor Department said the plea deal was reviewed by the Justice Department leadership and followed the rules."

Chris Cuomo said on [CNN's Cuomo Prime Time](#) (2/21, 1.44M), "The irony. That guy is the Labor Secretary. That's what kids all over this country get conscripted into by way of trafficking. They're being made into sex workers. Epstein, by all apparent indications, was part of that trade. Now the guy is the Labor Secretary after cutting him a deal like this?"

Former FBI Special Agent Asha Rangappa said on [CNN's Cuomo Prime Time](#) (2/21, 1.44M), "He definitely got a sweetheart deal. And I want to point out something here, the President made the cornerstone of his State of the Union Address stopping trafficking, and that this was a big concern for him," which he used to justify his border wall.

Former Trump White House Lawyer Jim Schultz, however, said on [CNN's Cuomo Prime Time](#) (2/21, 1.44M), "I don't believe it's a sweetheart deal at all." He added, "He got 18 months in prison. He had to register as a sex offender and the victims

were designated as victims so they could be compensated civilly. That's not something that could have happened had Acosta and his office not stepped in."

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