



HUMAN TRAFFICKING

SUPPORT: SB 1440, 1436, 1426 (Flores); HB 1017, 1019, 1021 (Spano)

BACKGROUND: Human trafficking is modern day slavery which produces multi-billion dollar profits through the exploitation of children, women, and men. Human trafficking victims are subjected to sexual or labor oppression through force, fraud or coercion. Florida's agriculture and tourism industries have made our state a prime destination for trafficking.

Domestic minor sex trafficking is one of the most prevalent, yet under-reported and under-prosecuted, human trafficking offense in Florida. Runaway and "throwaway" children in our society are picked up on our streets and forced into sex acts in exchange for food and a bed.

Trafficking victims are often powerless in escaping their circumstances as a result of psychological and physical abuse, threats, and isolation, among other oppressive means used by the trafficker. Even upon rescue, victims struggle to regain their lives as they continue to be endangered by their former traffickers and are often constrained by a criminal history of illegal acts they were coercively forced to commit.

BILL PROVISIONS:

- SB 1440 and HB 1017 prohibit the employment of minors in adult theaters, require adult theaters to verify ages of employees and independent contractors, and require adult theaters to maintain specified documentation.
- SB 1436 and HB 1019 provide an exemption from public records requirements regarding the location of safe houses.
- SB 1426 and HB 1021 provide an exemption from public records requirements relating to criminal history records of human trafficking victims that have been ordered expunged.

RATIONALE: "Human Trafficking is a horrific crime against the basic dignity and rights of the human person. All efforts must be expended to end it. In the end, we must work together – Church, state, and community – to eliminate the root causes and markets that permit traffickers to flourish to make whole the survivors of this crime; and to ensure that, one day soon, trafficking in human persons vanishes from the face of the earth*."

These proposed bills will prohibit the employment of minors in an adult entertainment industry, will provide confidentiality for the location of safe houses so as to protect the victims while receiving treatment and services, and will assist those who have been trafficked to be treated as victims rather than criminals by expunged criminal records of actions committed under the coercion of traffickers.

*USCCB On Human Trafficking, 2007

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