

Senator Tracey Eide human trafficking resolution

Jan. 11, 2012

WHEREAS, President Obama declared the month of January as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month; and

WHEREAS, January 11th has been designated as the National Day of Human Trafficking Awareness by the United States Congress; and

WHEREAS, Washington state has been in the forefront, nationally, in the fight against modern day slavery and exploitation; and

WHEREAS, Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world, affecting women, men, children, and communities; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, the Washington state task force against the trafficking of persons was created, the first of its kind in the nation, and that same year Washington was the first state in the nation to enact the international matchmaking organization regulation act, also known as the mail-order bride act, which requires international matchmaking agencies to provide, upon request, criminal and marital background information on Washington state residents using the agency to meet prospective spouses in other countries; and

WHEREAS, In 2003, Washington became the first state to criminalize human trafficking and to extend protections to mail-order brides; and

WHEREAS, In 2005, Washington again led all other states in establishing protocols for providing services to victims of trafficking, and in providing funds for legal aid to noncitizens who are victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, or human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, In 2006, Washington became only the second state to place restrictions on sex tourism and provided funding for the Washington State Task Force Against the Trafficking of Persons to resume its work leading to the creation of a Comprehensive Response to Human Trafficking; and

WHEREAS, In 2007, Washington passed ground breaking legislation that enacted harsher penalties for the commercial sexual abuse of minors.

WHEREAS, In 2008, the Washington State Legislature enacted legislation adding victims of trafficking to the list of victims eligible for the address confidentiality program; and

WHEREAS, In 2012 Washington authorized funding to house victims of human trafficking and their families, allowed law enforcement to conduct surveillance on suspected human-trafficking and child-prostitution activities with the consent of the victim, amended the criminal definition of human trafficking to include the illegal harvesting or sale of human organs and broadened the scope of the crime to hold criminals accountable caught transporting a person knowing the person would be forced into prostitution or manual labor; and

WHEREAS, Victims of human trafficking need support in order to escape and recover from the physical, mental, emotional, economic, and spiritual trauma associated with their victimization; and

WHEREAS, Human traffickers use many physical and psychological techniques to coerce and control their victims, including the use of violence or threats of violence against the victim or the victim's family, isolation from the public, isolation from the victim's family and religious or ethnic communities, language and cultural barriers, shame, control of the victim's possessions, confiscation of passports and other identification documents, and threats of arrest, deportation, or imprisonment if the victim attempts to reach out for assistance or leave; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate recognize those people and organizations that fight daily against the scourge of human trafficking, and encourage others to observe the National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Prevention Month and the National Day of Trafficking Awareness with appropriate ceremonies and activities to combat human trafficking; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the API Safety Center & Chaya, the Center for Children and Youth Justice, the City of Seattle, Community Advocacy Partnership, Coordinated Response to Commercially Sexually Exploited Children, Esteem Outreach of Life Center in Tacoma, Genesis Project, the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center, the International Rescue Committee, New Horizons Ministries, Not for Sale Washington, NW Coalition against Trafficking, the Polaris Project, Refugee Women's Alliance, Seattle Against Slavery, Seattle Police Department, Shared Hope International, Soroptimist Coalition to Stop Human Trafficking, The Tronie Foundation, United States Attorney General's Office Western Division, University of Washington's Anti-Trafficking Task Force, the Washington Advisory Committee on Trafficking, Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network, Washington Attorney General's Office, Washington Engage, and Youth Care.