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ACR-125 National Human Trafficking Awareness Month. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 125

CHAPTER 19

Relative to National Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State March 04, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 125, Pellerin. National Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

This measure would recognize the month of January 2024 as National Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, For more than two centuries, the United States has worked to protect human rights, promoting a just and free society and advancing the dignity of all human beings. The government continues to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts to address human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, Classified as a felony, human trafficking is a crime that involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to recruit, harbor, transport, provide, or obtain a person for the purpose of labor and commercial sexual exploitation; and

WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of State's annual Trafficking in Persons Report, human trafficking cases have been reported in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and United States territories; and

WHEREAS, The International Labour Organization (ILO) has reported that economic and food insecurity are directly linked to an increase of both forced child labor and child sex trafficking; and

WHEREAS, Since 2018, the United States Department of Labor reports an increase of 69 percent of children being illegally employed and exploited, and in the last fiscal year, the department found that 835 companies it investigated employed more than 3,800 children in violation of federal labor laws; and

WHEREAS, The California Child Welfare Council found that anywhere from 50 percent to 80 percent of victims of commercial sexual exploitation, including child sex trafficking, are or were formerly involved with the child welfare system; and

WHEREAS, According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) 2022 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, boys represent the fastest growing segment of identified human trafficking victims, and gender norms and masculine stereotypes hinder identification of male trafficking victims. This false perception plays out in several ways that are damaging to boys and men who have experienced trafficking; and

WHEREAS, The 2014 U.S. Trafficking in Persons Report highlights labor trafficking by forced criminality (LTFC), yet this problem remains underidentified. LTFC refers to all labor trafficking where the labor or services the victim is being forced, coerced, or

defrauded into performing could otherwise be classified as a crime. Because all LTFC victims have committed a crime, they are often misidentified as criminals, and often do not have access to the protections and services that would become accessible to them if they were appropriately identified as victims, and victims of LTFC often do not self-identify and rarely report the crime to law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, According to the ILO, of the total number of global human trafficking victims, 4,900,000 are women and girls in forced commercial sexual exploitation; and

WHEREAS, According to a 2013 United States Department of Justice study examining the race of sex trafficking victims, 40.4 percent were Black, 23.9 percent were Hispanic, and 4.3 percent were Asian; and

WHEREAS, The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's "Snapshot on the State of Black Women and Girls: Sex Trafficking in the U.S." states that to better understand the high rates of sex trafficking among Black women and girls, research has indicated the continued sexualization of Black women and girls' bodies, which has played out since slavery. The myths around Black women and girls' hypersexuality and the continued treatment of Black girls as older than their age must be explored when looking at the data surrounding the prevalent rates of domestic sex trafficking of Black girls; and

WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of State's annual Trafficking in Persons Report, racial and ethnic minority groups, the LGBTQI+ community, and indigenous populations are extremely vulnerable to exploitation due to social, legal, and cultural marginalization. Studies show that Native American women and girls are victims of human trafficking at a much higher rate compared to the overall population; and

WHEREAS, These same groups are more likely to be affected by climate change as it places them in more vulnerable situations, and, consequently, be more vulnerable to human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking was established by Congress and sits as the world's preeminent human trafficking advisory body. It is led by survivors of human trafficking and advises federal policy makers on antitrafficking policies; and

WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of State's 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report, meaningful inclusion of survivors as antitrafficking experts must be further integrated across global antitrafficking efforts and accepted as a norm. Partnership between governments, multilateral organizations, and survivors of human trafficking not only improves antitrafficking efforts, but also dismantles the risk of misconceptions, shame, retraumatization, and reexploitation of survivors within their communities, empowers survivors, promotes equity within organizations, and reduces vulnerability to revictimization; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis in the anti-human trafficking sector on the value of public health and rights-based approaches to addressing human trafficking. A public health approach to violence prevention is an effective way of ending violence by focusing on the health, safety, and well-being of the entire population, rather than focusing on individual instances of violence and punishment for crime; and

WHEREAS, The State of California is dedicated to protecting victims of human trafficking and ensuring they are not themselves criminalized, and the State of California commits to continuing to collaborate with skilled professionals at the local, state, and national levels conducting investigations, collaborations, and trainings, organizing public outreach, promoting awareness, and directly assisting victims of human trafficking; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Assembly recognizes the month of January 2024 as National Human Trafficking Awareness Month; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.