

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Combat Human Trafficking

01/29/2021

TRENTON – Today, during National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, Governor Phil Murphy signed legislation (A883) amending the "Human Trafficking Prevention, Protection, and Treatment Act" to direct the Commission on Human Trafficking to broaden its current mission of developing public awareness of human trafficking to also include awareness of victim remedies and services and trafficking prevention, including the creation of a public awareness sign. The Commission would develop and determine the language for the public awareness sign, which must contain the national, 24-hour toll-free hotline telephone service on human trafficking operated pursuant to federal law.

"It is essential that we shine a light on the devastation of human trafficking and I am proud to enact legislation that will strengthen our mission to raise public awareness surrounding this pervasive issue," said Governor Murphy. "We must remember that our battle against human trafficking extends far beyond this month as we commit to continuing the fight for fundamental human rights and freedoms."

The bill also requires the sign to be posted, to the extent practicable, in places that are clearly conspicuous and visible to employees, as well as members of the public, in such establishments as strip clubs or sexually-oriented businesses; places of business of employers of massage or bodywork therapists; bars, hotels, motels, and similar places of public accommodation; and in airports, rail and bus stations, truck stops, and service and safety rest areas located along interstate highways, as well as on all forms of public transportation, including railroad and passenger cars. A business or establishment that does not comply with the bill's requirement for posting signs would be liable for a civil penalty of \$300 for a first offense and \$1000 for each subsequent offense.

Primary sponsors of the bill include Assemblymembers Thomas Giblin, Britnee Timberlake, Annette Quijano, and Senators Tom Kean and Nicholas Scutari.

"The true prevalence of human trafficking cannot be confirmed by incomplete data," said Assemblyman Tom Giblin. "As a result, we have to remain vigilant through public policy and committed to raising the level of public awareness."

"Equipping people with the information to safely connect and refer a potential trafficking victim to the appropriate resources is crucial," said Assemblywoman Britnee Timberlake. "We also have to do better to ensure there is no room for willful ignorance or complicity."

"The trafficking hotline is one of the safest and most effective tools for victims to access emergency assistance," said Assemblywoman Quijano. "Putting signage clearly displaying the hotline number all throughout our public spaces is therefore an incredibly important strategy to get those in crisis the help they need."

"I am proud that this legislation will be enacted today, especially during Human Trafficking Awareness Month," said Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean. "The more we raise awareness of human trafficking, including what it looks like, where it happens, and how to get help, the harder it will be for traffickers to get away with their despicable crimes."

"Human trafficking is unfortunately more prevalent than people realize," said Senator Nicholas Scutari. "Raising awareness about human trafficking is imperative and empowering the public to know the signs of someone in this scenario and how to report potential incidents will strengthen our efforts to combat this horrid practice."

Governor Phil Murphy

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