SENATE RESOLUTION

8612

By Senators Torres, Dhingra, and L. Wilson

WHEREAS, Human trafficking is a horrendous crime that harms thousands of adults and children across the United States, as well as their families and loved ones; and

WHEREAS, Human trafficking subjects men, women, and children in the United States to forced labor, debt bondage, document servitude, and sexual abuse; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, President Obama designated the month of January as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, to advocate for legislation to protect survivors and punish offenders, educate leaders, and raise awareness on ways the public can combat human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, Human trafficking is modern-day slavery, victimizing vulnerable populations by force or coercion; and

WHEREAS, Washington ranks thirteenth among the states for active cases in federal courts for human trafficking cases; and

WHEREAS, Reports show Washington is a prime location for human trafficking, due to its long international border, major seaports and airports, vast and remote rural areas, dependence on agriculture, and major cross-state freeways; and

WHEREAS, Recently Port of Seattle commissioners and Alaska and Delta Airlines signed a pledge to help combat human trafficking by promoting awareness and training employees at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport to look for and recognize traffickers and their victims; and

WHEREAS, Reports from the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children show a 98.66 percent increase of online enticement reports in 2020 compared to 2019, due to greater online presence among students; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Justice Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section reports that twelve years old is the average age of entry into sex trade and pornography; and

WHEREAS, A report by the Modern Slavery Research Project found that one in five youth experiencing homelessness has been a victim of sex or labor trafficking; and

WHEREAS, Human trafficking has been a particularly prevalent concern as of late in Seattle, the Yakima Valley, and Tri-Cities; and

WHEREAS, Washington's Internet Crimes Against Children task force, which dates to 1998, is part of a nationwide effort and works with law enforcement agencies statewide to fight human traffickers; and

WHEREAS, Washington's attorney general maintains a website intended to serve as a hub for victims of human trafficking, with the address of watraffickinghelp.org; and

WHEREAS, In 2003, Washington was the first state to pass a law criminalizing human trafficking and continues to have the most stringent law in the country; and

WHEREAS, January serves as an ideal time to renew efforts to increase awareness of human trafficking, and understanding of how to identify and deter this scourge;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate recognize the importance of education regarding and awareness of the issue of human trafficking and the state and federal resources available to support victims.