SENATE RESOLUTION

8658

By Senators Torres, McCune, and Wagoner

WHEREAS, Human trafficking is a heinous crime that harms millions of men, women, and children worldwide including their family and friends; and

WHEREAS, It is an egregious violation of human rights and a modern form of slavery that impacts countless individuals worldwide through forced labor, fraud, physical harm, and sexual exploitation; and

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama declared January to be National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month in 2010 to show the nation's commitment to fighting and protecting victims against human trafficking domestically and internationally; and

WHEREAS, Including efforts to educate the public by raising awareness on how society can help aid in hindering human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of minors; and

WHEREAS, Human trafficking is the fastest-growing criminal industry in the world today, according to the United States Department of Justice, which estimates that between 14,000 and 17,000 people are trafficked into the country each year; and

WHEREAS, In Washington, each year over two hundred cases involving human trafficking were recorded, according to the National Human Trafficking Hotline; and

WHEREAS, Washington is currently ranked eleventh among the states for human trafficking with a national average of one hundred sixty-nine trafficking cases; and

WHEREAS, In 2003, Washington was the first state to pass a law criminalizing human trafficking, making it a felony to recruit, harbor, transport, or obtain any person for labor or other services using force or fraud; and

WHEREAS, Later in 2008 as a response to the lack of these crimes being recognized, the Attorney General's Office issued a roundtable of legislative, law enforcement, and social service leaders experienced in the issue to find viable approaches to better addressing this serious issue; and

WHEREAS, Washington's international border with Canada makes it a major hotspot for trafficking, with sources estimating that the border contributes about fifteen hundred to two thousand victims annually; and

WHEREAS, Major seaports and airports, as well as rural areas and cross-state highways, are contributing factors associated with increased risk of trafficking; and

WHEREAS, The Port of Seattle commissioners and specific airlines signed a pledge to help prevent human trafficking by educating their employees and training them on what to look for regarding the traffickers and their victims; and

WHEREAS, Trafficking has been a major problem in cities such as Seattle, the Yakima Valley, and the Tri-Cities; and

WHEREAS, January has been designated nationally as a time to create awareness of issues related to human trafficking and use education to help prevent these crimes and address the needs of victims;

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.

I, Sarah Bannister, Secretary of the Senate,

do hereby certify that this is a true and

correct copy of Senate Resolution 8658,

adopted by the Senate

January 22, 2024

SARAH BANNISTER

Secretary of the Senate