



STATE OF TENNESSEE
PROCLAMATION

BY THE GOVERNOR

WHEREAS, human trafficking includes the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, purchasing, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act or forced labor services through the use of force, fraud, deception, or coercion; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking victims may be of any age, sex, race, or background, and the most vulnerable include children, victims of child abuse, runaway youth, people without homes, and victims of domestic violence, conflict, or social discrimination; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking deprives victims of their safety, freedom, and dignity, and tears apart families and communities, fuels criminal activity, and threatens security at the state and national level; and

WHEREAS, since 2019, the State of Tennessee has allocated nearly \$15 million in funding to investigate human trafficking and to partner with groups that fight human trafficking, raise awareness of trafficking, and support trafficking victims, and the Tennessee General Assembly increased penalties for human traffickers to punish offenders to the fullest extent of the law; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation is required to submit an annual report on child and human trafficking crimes and trends; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee has criminalized human trafficking and remains committed to eradicating this abhorrent and immoral enterprise through legislative efforts, strong policy, and collaborative work; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, Tennessee was recognized by Shared Hope International as the highest-performing state for laws to protect children and youth from sex trafficking, receiving the organization's first "A" grade; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee recognizes that the protection of a strong posture against human trafficking requires a constant pursuit of excellence and continuous improvement; and

WHEREAS, dedicating a month to promote education, resources, and community efforts will provide Tennesseans with the knowledge to identify human trafficking, to support survivors, to prevent this illicit practice, and to hold perpetrators accountable;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim January 2024 as

Human Trafficking Awareness Month

in Tennessee and encourage all citizens to join me in this worthy observance.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed at Nashville on this second day of January 2024.

Bill Lee

Governor

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Secretary of State