



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1329-2008, **Version:** A

Proposed Res. No. 1329-A

Resolution urging the United States Senate to pass the United States House of Representatives' version of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act.

By Council Members Sears, Fidler, James, Liu, Palma, Weprin, Lappin, Mark-Viverito, Gerson and Garodnick

Whereas, The Department of Justice considers human trafficking a type of modern day slavery or coerced labor; and

Whereas, The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) refers to human trafficking as “severe forms of trafficking in persons,” including “sex trafficking” and “labor trafficking;” and

Whereas, TVPA defines sex trafficking as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person forced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years;” and

Whereas, TVPA further defines labor trafficking as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery;” and

Whereas, According to the United States Department of State, approximately 800,000 people are trafficked each year across international borders and millions are trafficked within their own countries, the majority of whom are women and children; and

Whereas, The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) estimates that 50,000 people are trafficked into the United States each year and forced into labor or sex trades for little or no pay; and

Whereas, In December 2007, the United States House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed H.R. 3887, also known as the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (the “Act”);

and

Whereas, The Act would amend TVPA to allow DOJ to prosecute traffickers without having to prove fraud, force or coercion, or a victim's status as a minor, but would instead allow prosecutors to use these aggravating circumstances as a basis for enhanced penalties; and

Whereas, Currently, federal law requires testimony from victims in trafficking cases, even though such victims have more than likely been traumatized and may have reason to fear retaliation against themselves or their families if they testify against their traffickers; and

Whereas, By eliminating the need for trafficking victims to testify about fraud, force or coercion, the Act would provide prosecutors with a more effective tool to crack down on traffickers; and

Whereas, The Act would also authorize critical funding to combat trafficking and would require the U. S. Attorney General to conduct a biennial survey of trafficking in the United States; and

Whereas, After passing the United States House of Representatives by a vote of 405-2, the Act was sent to the United States Senate, where it was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary; and

Whereas, A companion bill, S.3061, has been introduced in the Senate; and

Whereas, Human trafficking is a horrific crime that violates the human rights of its victims; and

Whereas, The United States should do all that it can to prevent human trafficking, prosecute those who commit it, and assist its victims; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the New York City Council urges the United States Senate to pass the United States House of Representatives' version of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act.

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