

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 679

By Jones S

A RESOLUTION to designate May as "Human Trafficking Awareness Month" in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is the intent of this General Assembly that Tennessee become and remain a place free of the insidiously evil acts of trafficking of human beings; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery where people are profiting from the control and exploitation of others for purposes of physical labor or commercial sexual activities; and

WHEREAS, the trafficking of human beings for sexual servitude and forced labor is considered second only to transfer of arms as the largest and fastest growing illegal activity in the world; and

WHEREAS, children are victims of human sex trafficking, they are commercially sexually exploited by traffickers who enslave them and sell them for the purpose of sexually pleasuring customers who rape, molest, and sexually abuse these children; and

WHEREAS, children in the child welfare and juveniles justice systems are especially preyed upon by human traffickers because of vulnerabilities they possess subsequent to extreme trauma, maltreatment, pervasive neglect, and behavioral health problems experienced by these children in their lives; and

WHEREAS, a recent TBI study indicated the following: seventy-eight of Tennessee's ninety-five counties reported at least one case of human sex trafficking; sixty-eight counties reported at least one case of human sex trafficking of a minor; and of the sixty-eight counties reporting cases of trafficking of minors, Knox, Shelby, Davidson, and Coffee Counties each reported more than one hundred cases involving trafficking of minors during that time period; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, this General Assembly passed and the Governor signed into law legislation that identifies minors involved in sex trafficking as victims, not offenders; provides for judicial forfeiture of ill gotten gains in conjunction with any act of trafficking human beings; and, establishes an emergency 1-800 hotline to receive tips and leads on possible criminal activities involving human trafficking and to provide information to assist victims in obtaining protection and relief from their bondage; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly is fully engaged in building and strengthening State laws and public policies that promote prevention of any Tennessean, especially children, becoming ensnared in a web of trafficking, in providing protection and relief to unfortunate victims of these horrific crimes, and to enable timely prosecutions of those who would in anyway carry out and profit from acts of human trafficking within the borders of our great State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we designate May 2012 as “Human Trafficking Awareness Month” in Tennessee and encourage all citizens to increase their awareness and promote prevention of the scourge of human trafficking that threatens the safety and well being of many Tennesseans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.