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JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE WEEK OF JANUARY 7, 2018 AS HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS WEEK

WHEREAS, human trafficking is criminal recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sexual exploitation through the use of force, fraud or coercion, including but not limited to involuntary servitude, sex trafficking, debt bondage, domestic servitude and forced child labor, and can, but does not necessarily, include the physical transportation of a victim from one location to another; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking violates basic human rights, denies victims their personal freedom and knows no geographical boundaries; and

WHEREAS, traffickers target men, women and children, both United States citizens and foreign nationals, isolate them from society and exploit them for personal and monetary gain; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking is recognized as the fastest-growing criminal enterprise in the world, and the International Labour Organization estimates annual profits of \$150,000,000,000 from forced labor internationally; and

WHEREAS, the International Labour Organization estimated in 2012 that 26% of persons trafficked were children, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimated in 2014 that one out of every 6 endangered runaways in the United States reported to them was likely a child sex-trafficking victim; and

WHEREAS, victims of human trafficking suffer severe emotional, psychological and physical damage at the hands of their traffickers, who instill fear in their victims in order to keep them enslaved, resulting in complex post-traumatic stress disorder and increased rates of disease, drug addiction and other lifelong effects of trauma, and these experiences may require years of specialized health care and mental health services as part of a victim's recovery; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking exists in the State, and many state, federal and local agencies and organizations are working to prevent human trafficking, to intervene when human trafficking is discovered and to provide restorative care to victims; and

WHEREAS, no one person, organization, agency or community can eliminate human trafficking, but we can work together to educate our entire population about how we can all prevent human trafficking and provide support to survivors of human trafficking and to their communities; and

WHEREAS, the State is committed to protecting the vulnerable and ending human trafficking through prevention, prosecution, education and awareness; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-eighth Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize the week of January 7, 2018 as Human Trafficking Awareness Week.