

By: Parker

H.R. No. 975

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Human trafficking, second only to drug smuggling
2 among criminal enterprises, is an issue of particular urgency in
3 Texas; and

4 WHEREAS, There are an estimated 800,000 victims of human
5 trafficking in the United States, nearly 250,000 of whom are
6 children and the great majority of whom are U.S. citizens; the Texas
7 attorney general has reported that almost 20 percent of these human
8 trafficking victims travel through Texas, while the Department of
9 Justice has identified Interstate 10 between El Paso and Houston as
10 a major human trafficking corridor; and

11 WHEREAS, The United States enacted the Trafficking Victims
12 Protection Act in 2000, beginning an enhanced effort to address
13 human trafficking; the same year, the United Nations focused the
14 attention of the global community on the scourge of human
15 trafficking by adopting the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and
16 Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which
17 called for the criminalization of all acts of trafficking and for
18 governmental responses to incorporate the "3P" paradigm of
19 prevention, criminal prosecution, and victim protection; and

20 WHEREAS, In 2003, Texas became one of the first states in the
21 nation to recognize human trafficking as a crime, and it maintains a
22 reputation as a leader in the effort to shut down traffickers; yet,
23 as the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force noted in its
24 *Report 2011*, even measuring the full scope of this form of crime is

1 difficult because currently only four regions of Texas are entering
2 data into the national Human Trafficking Reporting System, which
3 collects information about investigations, prosecutions,
4 perpetrators, and victims; obtaining information at the local level
5 remains challenging because victims are difficult to identify,
6 since trafficking may look like a traditional crime such as
7 prostitution, domestic violence, or unpaid wages, and many victims
8 have been frightened into silence or are not aware that they are
9 protected under Texas and U.S. law; and

10 WHEREAS, The Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force
11 has enumerated a number of priorities for state leaders, including
12 identifying additional prevention strategies, identifying victims
13 and presenting cases for prosecution, addressing gaps in victim
14 services and in resources for law enforcement agencies, and
15 implementing a statewide database to collect and share law
16 enforcement and prosecutorial data; and

17 WHEREAS, Texas has made significant progress toward raising
18 awareness and increasing investigations and prosecutions of human
19 trafficking, as well as toward ensuring that victims receive the
20 services they need, and the state must continue its efforts to push
21 back against this heinous crime; now, therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
23 Legislature hereby recognize the last week of January 2012 as Texas
24 Human Trafficking Awareness Week and encourage all Texans to learn
25 more about human trafficking and to alert the authorities to any
26 suspected related incidents.