

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Public Health
For HB 3501

Compiled on: Monday, April 3, 2023 6:01 PM

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Hearing Date: April 3, 2023 9:00 AM

David Griffin
Rock-Tech International
Alvarado, TX

I support HB 3501

James Branden
Self
Carrollton, TX

For

Kristine Sproul
Self
Marble Falls, TX

Consider the consequences if not followed

Kevin Albritton
Self
Nacogdoches, TX

Human trafficking has to be stopped. No matter how.

Torey Tipton
Allies Against Slavery
Austin, TX

Human trafficking is one of the most significant human rights challenges society faces today. At any given time in the state of Texas, there are an estimated 313,000 victims of labor or sex trafficking with 79,000 of those being victims of minor sex trafficking. Combatting this heinous crime deserves our best efforts to prevent it, protect victims, and prosecute those responsible.

HB 3501 is a critical piece of ensuring that individuals who have contact with potential victims know the signs to look for as well as giving victims the opportunity to ask for help. As the operator of Lighthouse, the state's largest screening and human trafficking data platform, we know how critical education is to identifying victims and connecting them to care. We can't solve a problem we can't see and too often victims slip through the cracks, missed by those who could have helped. HB 3501's addition of tattoo and body piercing studios to this list of business types required to train on human trafficking is a needed step forward towards a comprehensive statewide response to trafficking.

Allies Against Slavery supports this bill and encourages the committee members to approve it.

Heather Bellino
Texas Advocacy Project
Austin, TX

As an advocate for survivors of human trafficking, sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, child abuse, and stalking, and in my capacity as the Chief Legal Officer of Texas Advocacy Project, a leading nonprofit that provides free legal and social solutions to such survivors across the state, I am pleased to write today on the benefits of HB 3501.

Traffickers may use tattoos as a way to brand their victims, marking them as their property or as a way to identify them within their trafficking network. These tattoos may be overt or covert, and may include the trafficker's name, a specific symbol or code, or other identifying information. For example, victims of sex trafficking may be tattooed with a barcode, an abuser's name or initials, or a dollar sign to signify that they are being sold for sex. Labor trafficking victims may be tattooed with a specific symbol or logo associated with their trafficker's organization or with the industry in which they are being forced to work.

These tattoos can also have long-lasting psychological effects, reminding victims of their abuse and making it more difficult for them to move on from their traumatic experiences.

It is important for tattoo artists, body piercers, and other professionals to be trained in recognizing the signs of human trafficking, including identifying tattoos that may indicate a person is being trafficked and/or identifying a victim before unknowingly "branding" them for their abusers. By doing so, they can play an important role in identifying and assisting victims of trafficking. Employees who complete the training will be better equipped to identify victims of human trafficking and provide them with appropriate support and resources. This can help protect victims from further harm and increase the likelihood that they will be able to escape their situation.

Lauren Grogan
The Jensen Project
IRVING, TX

I support this bill.