**BILL ANALYSIS**

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| Senate Research Center | S.B. 955 |
| 89R2612 MCF-D | By: Parker |
|  | Criminal Justice |
|  | 3/13/2025 |
|  | As Filed |

**AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Human trafficking is a global crisis that affects millions of people every year, including men, women, and children who are subjected to forced labor, sexual exploitation, and other forms of modern-day slavery. In Texas, human trafficking is a significant problem, with the state ranking second in the nation for the number of reported cases.

Traffickers use various tactics to lure and control their victims, including recruitment from vulnerable populations such as homeless individuals, runaways, and foster children. In some cases, traffickers also recruit their victims from jails or correctional facilities while they are confined, taking advantage of their vulnerable and isolated status. This type of recruitment is particularly heinous, as victims are already in a vulnerable and restricted environment with limited options for escape or assistance.

S.B. 955 enhances the penalty for traffickers who recruit their victims from jails, raising these cases from second degree felonies to first degree felonies. Enhancing the penalty for these traffickers can help deter this type of criminal activity and send a message that such behavior will not be tolerated in Texas. By increasing the punishment for these offenses, the state can better protect vulnerable populations and hold traffickers accountable for their heinous crimes.

S.B. 955 also clarifies currently duplicative language in the statute.

As proposed, S.B. 955 amends current law relating to the punishment for the offense of trafficking of persons.

**RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

**SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Reenacts Section 20A.02(b), Penal Code, as amended by Chapters 93 (S.B. 1527) and 452 (H.B. 3554), Acts of the 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023, and amends it, as follows:

(b) Provides that an offense under Section 20A.02 (Trafficking of Persons) is a felony of the first degree if:

(1)-(3) makes no changes to these subdivisions; or

(4) the actor:

(A) makes no changes to this paragraph;

(B) makes a nonsubstantive change to this paragraph;

(C) subject to Subsection (b-1), recruited, enticed, or obtained the trafficked person from a shelter or facility operating as a residential treatment center that serves runaway youth, foster children, the homeless, or persons subjected to human trafficking, domestic violence, or sexual assault; or

(D) subject to Subsection (b-1), recruited, enticed, or obtained the trafficked person from a correctional facility while the trafficked person was confined in the facility.

SECTION 2. Reenacts Section 20A.02(b-1), Penal Code, as amended by Chapters 93 (S.B. 1527) and 452 (H.B. 3554), Acts of the 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023, and amends it to provide that an offense under this section is a felony of the first degree punishable by certain sentences if it is shown on the trial of the offense that the actor committed the crime on certain premises, including a correctional facility, and to make nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 3. Makes the application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2025.