

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the month of January has been recognized as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month in King County since 2011; and

WHEREAS, trafficking in persons is now the world's second largest and fastest growing underground economy behind drug trafficking, disproportionately affecting immigrants, refugees, females, trans individuals, and people of color; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking is defined as the use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act; and

WHEREAS, with several local, high profile trafficking cases—such as the 1995 murder of Susana Remerata Blackwell, her unborn child, and friends Phoebe Dizon and Veronica Laureta inside the King County Courthouse by Ms. Blackwell's estranged and abusive husband; and the murder of Anastasia Solovieva from Kyrgyzstan by her husband in the Seattle area in 1999—international media attention sparked a movement to find ways to reduce human trafficking and aid the survivors; and

WHEREAS, in 2001 the University of Washington Women's Center, led by Dr. Sutapa Basu, in partnership with then State Rep. Velma Veloria, Emma Catague, and community organizations, such as Asian Pacific Islander Women and Family Safety Center (now API Chaya), convened a conference on and led efforts creating in statute the nation's first state task force against the trafficking of persons, and in 2002, then-Senator Kohl-Welles' bill on "bride tracking" became the first law of its kind in the nation; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, due to the work of the task force and the tireless efforts of Dr. Sutapa Basu, Emma Catague, Norma Timbang, and the leadership of Rep. Velma, Veloria, Washington State became the first state to criminalize human trafficking and continues to be a worldwide leader in adopting some of the most comprehensive laws against such heinous crimes; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, the CSEC task force was formed to ensure the safety and support of commercially sexually exploited children and has now engaged with over 120 organizations and trained thousands of individuals to identify and respond to trafficking; and

WHEREAS, in January 2013, King County launched a public awareness campaign to highlight the fight against human trafficking, using advertisements on Metro buses, billboards, radio, and TV to inform victims and the public that help is available; and

WHEREAS, King County, in partnership with the Port of Seattle, City of Seattle, Sound Transit, and other private sector and community partners, relaunched a public awareness campaign against human trafficking in January 2019, leading to a significantly increased number of calls to the National Human Trafficking Awareness Hotline in 2020; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the King County Council dedicated funds to develop new outreach and awareness materials in consultation with victims and survivors of trafficking, advocates and service providers; adopted a workplan and procurement policies package on anti-labor trafficking; and requested a report related to human trafficking awareness training and testing requirements for for-hire drivers; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, a similar awareness campaign was launched statewide, bringing together governments, ports, and transit agencies across the state to encourage survivors to self-report;

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the Metropolitan King County Council, proclaim the month of January 2023 as

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

in King County to call attention to this devastating issue, recognize those individuals and organizations that fight daily against the scourge of human trafficking, and encourage others to educate and engage themselves in all that can be done to combat these terrible crimes.

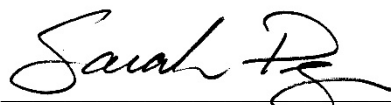
DATED this twenty-fourth day of January, 2023.



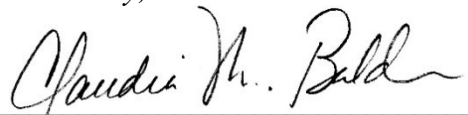
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