



Legislation Text

File #: 2018-0275, **Version:** 3

A MOTION requesting the executive to implement a Stop Human Trafficking public awareness campaign in partnership with the city of Seattle and the Port of Seattle.

WHEREAS, human trafficking is a form of exploitation in which people and groups profit from the control of others, and

WHEREAS, as defined under state and federal law, victims of human trafficking include children involved in commercial sex trade, adults age eighteen or over who are forced, coerced or deceived into commercial sex acts and anyone forced into different forms of "labor or services," such as domestic workers held in a home or farm workers forced to labor against their will, and

WHEREAS, human trafficking is considered to be one of the fastest growing criminal industries worldwide, and an ongoing problem in the Puget Sound region, and

WHEREAS, King County has long been a hotspot in the international trafficking of persons, due to our region's proximity to ports, major agricultural industry, shared international border with Canada, Sea-Tac International Airport and access to Interstate 5 along the Pacific coast states from Mexico, and

WHEREAS, Washington has been a national leader since 2002 in enacting state laws to combat human trafficking in all its forms. Washington was the first state to criminalize human trafficking, in 2003 and has since passed over forty laws addressing aspects of trafficking, such as labor trafficking, bride trafficking, stiffer penalties for commercial sexual abuse of minors and required training for teachers on how to recognize and prevent sexual abuse and exploitation of minors, and

WHEREAS, in 2013 the Washington state Legislature established both the Commercially Sexually

Exploited Children Statewide Coordinating Committee to recommend ways to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the Statewide Coordinating Committee on Sex Trafficking to oversee the distribution of funds collected from trafficking crimes to services for victims and survivors of the sex trade, and

WHEREAS, in 2015 the Washington state Legislature reestablished and strengthened the Washington State Task Force on the Trafficking of Persons and authorized the Department of Commerce Office of Crime Victims Advocacy to develop and maintain an information clearinghouse to share and coordinate statewide efforts to combat the trafficking of persons and provide training for law enforcement, prosecutors and court personnel on Washington's antitrafficking laws and the investigation and adjudication of sex trafficking, and

WHEREAS, grants from the Department of Commerce Office of Crime Victims Advocacy support direct service to individuals impacted by human trafficking, individuals at risk and outreach aimed at lowering barriers to services and increasing access, and

WHEREAS, since human trafficking is a clandestine crime that thrives on secrecy and on the social and physical isolation of its victims and survivors, making identification of victims, survivors, traffickers and their networks extremely challenging, and

WHEREAS, experts, community organizations and nonprofit organizations recommend strategies such as educating Washington communities about human trafficking, providing resources to implement antitrafficking strategies and helping victims escape their situations, and

WHEREAS, one significant tool for bringing human trafficking into the open is utilizing the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline that connects callers, law enforcement, services and information about the crime of human trafficking, and

WHEREAS, posting information on human trafficking and hotline phone numbers in high visibility locations increases awareness and the chances that incidents of human trafficking will be reported, victims will be identified and provided access to services and traffickers will be prosecuted, and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that information and hotline phone numbers should be posted in venues,

such as truck stops, bus stations, transit or train stations, airports, rest stops, hotels, motels, clubs, bars, farms, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, clinics, jails, police stations and shelters, in an effort to target locations where trafficking victims and survivors may see the information, and

WHEREAS, for victims and survivors of human trafficking, the public posting of information and hotline phone numbers in locations where the information may be seen is critical, as they might not otherwise have access to the Internet or to other forms of community-based outreach and awareness programs, and

WHEREAS, for community members, calls to the hotline often generate future tips and a better understanding of the red-flag indicators of human trafficking, and

WHEREAS, in 2010 the Washington state Legislature authorized antitrafficking posters to be placed in each Department of Transportation rest stop. In 2015, the Legislature built on the success of the rest stop posters by authorizing the Department of Commerce Office of Crime Victims Assistance to work with the business community and with antitrafficking stakeholders to develop new antitrafficking notices that will be available to any business that has a public restroom, and

WHEREAS, in 2013 and 2015 King County in collaboration with community partners conducted a public campaign to raise awareness on human trafficking, using advertisements on Metro buses, billboards, radio and television designed to educate the public and inform victims and survivors that assistance is available, and

WHEREAS, during the King County public outreach campaigns, the number of calls to the National Hotline from Washington increased significantly, and

WHEREAS, the city of Seattle is committed to ending human trafficking. The Seattle Police Department has a full-time human trafficking investigator and part-time civilian employee to respond to and investigates complaints of human trafficking. The commander of this detail is co-chair of the Washington Advisory Committee on Trafficking, and

WHEREAS, the Port of Seattle has long been active on efforts to combat human trafficking taking place

at its facilities and throughout the region, and whereas the Port of Seattle Commission on January 9, 2018, passed a motion directing staff to implement a new comprehensive, Port-wide antitrafficking strategy that includes, among other tactics, the development of a trafficking awareness campaign, and

WHEREAS, many of the successful strategies from earlier public awareness campaigns can be deployed again, and

WHEREAS, the region grew by 86,320 people from 2015 to 2016, the biggest population gain in the century and the highest growth rate in the past twenty years, and

WHEREAS, the region's population is expected to continue to experience significant growth which is likely to increase demand for human trafficking, and

WHEREAS, a combined outreach campaign among the city of Seattle, the Port of Seattle and King County would leverage the expansive community connections of all three jurisdictions to significantly expand the reach of the public awareness campaign and maximize efficient use of public resources;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The executive is requested to convene a workgroup to implement a Stop Human Trafficking public awareness campaign. The workgroup shall be convened by September 10, 2018, and jointly led by staff from the city of Seattle, the Port of Seattle, King County and subject matter experts. For King County, the workgroup shall include staff from public health Seattle and King County, the transit division, the department of community and human services, the prosecutor's office and the sheriff's office.

B. The public awareness campaign shall have three goals:

1. Raise public awareness about the nature of human trafficking, how and where it occurs locally, and how to prevent and stop it;
2. Help identify victims and survivors and promote access to services; and
3. Decrease demand through awareness.

C. The campaign shall focus placement of human trafficking public awareness materials in city of

Seattle, the Port of Seattle and King County facilities, and other locations where public awareness of human trafficking may have the greatest impact.

D. The workgroup shall consider opportunities to distribute information through city of Seattle, the Port of Seattle and King County websites and social media accounts.

E. The workgroup shall seek to use public service advertising resources for placement of human trafficking awareness materials on city of Seattle, King County and Sound Transit buses, light rail, commuter rail, trolleys, street cars and transit centers and stations where public awareness of human trafficking may have the greatest impact.

F. The workgroup shall to the extent feasible use successful strategies from the 2013 and 2015 outreach campaigns and utilize existing anti-human-trafficking outreach materials, to the extent that is legally permissible.

G. The selection and placement of the materials should be done in collaboration with subject matter experts. The following departments and divisions from King County shall participate: the transit division; the department of community and human services; and public health - Seattle & King County. The King County prosecutor's office and the King County superior court are encouraged to participate.

H. The workgroup shall explore partnership opportunities with public and private entities external to the city of Seattle, the Port of Seattle and King County for posting trafficking public awareness materials in locations where trafficked individuals and the public may see the information, including, but not limited to, hospitals, schools, community health clinics, shelters and along major thoroughfares.

I. The human trafficking public information materials used in the campaign shall be accessible in multiple languages and should include contact information for the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline.

J. The executive is requested to transmit to the council by September 21, 2019, a list of the facilities that displayed the materials and their locations throughout King County and the electronic outreach done as part

of the human trafficking public awareness strategy, in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy filed with the

clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers.