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Governor Ron DeSantis Signs Legislation to Combat Human Trafficking

LIGHTHOUSE POINT, Fla. — Today, Governor Ron DeSantis signed four bills to combat human trafficking, raise awareness of the signs and impacts of human trafficking, and impose critical reforms to hold human traffickers accountable.



Governor DeSantis is signing legislation to strengthen penalties against human traffickers and increase support for victims of human trafficking.

Permits and empowers victims of human trafficking to **sue and recover damages** from adult entertainment establishments or their owners or operators for exploiting them.



Cracks down on violators of human trafficking awareness requirements for hotels and other public lodging by shortening the compliance period and **imposing daily fines for repeat violators.**



Requires police officers to receive **four hours of human trafficking awareness training** during basic recruit training.



Allows human trafficking victims to **receive restitution** from the sale of their trafficker's seized property.



Expands Florida's human trafficking awareness campaign **into residential treatment centers** for children and teens.



Increases penalties for adult entertainment establishments that **exploit minors.**

72% of all human trafficking victims are illegal immigrants, largely impacting women and children.

60% of unaccompanied alien children crossing the border were caught and smuggled by cartels and exploited for drug trafficking or worse.



50% increase in human trafficking arrests over the last year.

“Biden’s Border Crisis is exacerbating human trafficking across the nation —72% of all human trafficking victims are illegal immigrants and 60% of unaccompanied alien children crossing the border were caught by cartels and exploited for drug trafficking, or worse,” said **Governor Ron DeSantis**. “While the federal government continues to ignore the people that are suffering due to its failed policies, Florida continues to act. Today, I am signing this legislation to better protect vulnerable children, ensure businesses are taking steps to identify and eliminate trafficking and to give victims a way to fight back against their abusers.”

“The Biden Administration’s reckless border policies have facilitated human trafficking and knowingly aided traffickers. As Biden fails to secure our border, Governor DeSantis continues to step in to protect Floridians,” said **Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez**. “We have enacted significant measures to ensure Floridians are not being subjected to this heinous crime. Traffickers are not welcomed in our state, and we will use the fullest extent of the law to hold them accountable.”

“Governor DeSantis is a strong leader in our fight to end human trafficking and rescue victims,” said **Attorney General Ashley Moody**. “I am proud to fight alongside him as we strengthen laws to stop human traffickers and help survivors heal.”

“At DCF, we take seriously our role in protecting Floridians from human trafficking and ensuring victims receive the recovery services they need to not only survive, but thrive,” said **Department of Children and Families Secretary Shevaun Harris**. “Today, we send a strong and clear message to the people of Florida, thanks to the DeSantis administration, we will always fight for survivors of human trafficking and we will not allow this evil to permeate our communities. Our Department stands ready to enhance outreach, amplify messaging on reporting signs of trafficking, and doing all we can to ensure quality safe home availability for both children and adults.”

Governor DeSantis signed Senate Bill (SB) 7064, Human Trafficking, which supports victims of human trafficking and strengthens penalties for human traffickers by:

- Establishing a civil action for victims of human trafficking against traffickers and providing that victims can recover damages and attorney’s fees from adult entertainment establishments.
- Allowing seized property from a human trafficker to be sold and proceeds be paid as restitution to victims.
- Requiring adult establishments to verify the identity and ages of all employees and establishing a third-degree felony for owners or operators of adult establishments that do not retain such records.
- Requiring offenders of prostitution, lewdness or related acts to attend an educational course on the impacts of human trafficking and negative impacts of commercial sex on people and their communities.

The Governor also signed SB 1690, Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking, which expands human trafficking awareness programs and increases human trafficking victim support by:

- Cracking down on repeat violators of human trafficking awareness requirements by shortening the cure period for an initial violation from 90 days to 45 days and imposing daily fines for any subsequent violation.
- Requiring residential treatment centers for children to place signs on their premises to warn children about the dangers of human trafficking and to demonstrate avenues for reporting instances of human trafficking.
- Mandating the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking to conduct a study and make recommendations regarding the regulation of adult safe houses, which provide housing and care specifically for survivors of human trafficking.
- Ensuring security measures for safe houses and safe foster homes includes detection of possible trafficking activity, coordination with law enforcement, and emergency response plans to search for absent or missing children.
- Requiring safe houses and foster homes to give kids age-appropriate programming to educate them on the signs and dangers of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking, approved by the Department of Children and Families.

Also signed today was HB 1465 which, among other provisions, makes human traffickers eligible for mandatory minimum sentences when they possess or discharge a firearm during the course of their crimes.

Additionally, the Governor signed SB 1210 which provides that a petition for human trafficking victim expunction and all pleadings and documents related to the petition are confidential and exempt from public records requirements.