

RESOLUTION NO. 20151015-033

WHEREAS, the City of Austin seeks to enhance public welfare, protect public safety, and promote human flourishing for all residents by declaring that freedom from human trafficking is a fundamental human right; and

WHEREAS, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) defines sex trafficking as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; and

WHEREAS, the TVPA defines labor trafficking as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery; and

WHEREAS, Title 5, Chapter 20A of the Texas Penal Code is consistent with the TVPA, defining “force, fraud or coercion” as the central means of exploitation by which a trafficker compels another person into labor and/or sex trafficking; and

WHEREAS, the United States (U.S.) Department of State acknowledges that “trafficking in persons,” “human trafficking,” and “modern slavery” are umbrella terms describing “activities involved when someone obtains or holds a person in compelled service;” and

WHEREAS, the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council have repeatedly affirmed that “human trafficking violates and impairs fundamental human rights;” and

WHEREAS, the Global Slavery Index, which defines human trafficking as one person possessing or controlling another person in such a way as to significantly deprive that person of their individual liberty, with the intention of exploiting that person through their use, management, profit, transfer, or disposal, estimates that 35.8 million men, women, and children around the world are trapped in human trafficking today; and

WHEREAS, one in every six endangered runaways reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in 2014 were likely sex trafficking victims; and

WHEREAS, one in every 11 cases of human trafficking reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center originated in Texas in 2014; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. National Association of Counties, more than four out of five counties with populations above 250,000, including Travis County, report that human trafficking is a problem while one in two counties of the same size report that human trafficking arrests are increasing; and

WHEREAS, victims of trafficking can be both foreign and U.S. citizens as well as adults and minors; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement, city and local agencies, courts, and other local government entities are charged with protecting those who suffer cruelty, oppression, and violence; and

WHEREAS, victims and survivors of human trafficking face many challenges, some of which, directly or indirectly, may be addressed by the City; and

WHEREAS, the Central Texas Coalition Against Human Trafficking (CTCAHT) was created in 2003 by leaders in the Austin community, including law enforcement, social service providers, and educators such as the Austin Police Department Human Trafficking & Vice Unit, the Austin Police Department Victim Services Unit, the Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault at the University of Texas, and the Travis County Sheriff's Office, in order to coordinate services for victims of trafficking, prosecute cases of human trafficking, and to raise awareness of the issue in the Central Texas area; and

WHEREAS, CTCAHT is currently made up of the Austin Police Department - Human Trafficking & Vice Unit, American Gateways, Austin/Travis County Department of Health and Human Services, Refugee Health Screening Clinic, Caritas of Austin, Central Texas Youth Services, Green Leaf Refugee Services, LifeWorks, National Domestic Violence Hotline, Office of the Attorney General, Refugee Services of Texas, Safe PlaceSol Community Counseling, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, Texas Health and Human Services, Commission/Office of Immigration and Refugee Affairs, Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, University of Texas, School of Social Work - Institute of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, U.S. Attorney's Office, What's Your Response and, Zonta Club of Austin; and

WHEREAS, in February of 2004, the Austin Police Department implemented the Immigrant Protection Team (IPT) to help combat crimes against vulnerable immigrant populations in Austin. The IPT was attached to the Austin

Police Department Robbery Unit and assisted with robberies involving immigrant victims, as well as addressing cases of fraud and scams affecting the immigrant community; and

WHEREAS, in October 2004, the Austin Police Department applied for a federal grant to help combat human trafficking. The Bureau of Justice Assistance awarded the three-year grant in December 2004. The grant was one of ten awarded nationwide that provided funding for 10 task forces under the TVPA; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, IPT's name and mission was changed to the Human Trafficking Unit to reflect the focus on investigating the crimes associated with human trafficking and on finding and assisting human trafficking victims - who may be immigrants or U.S. citizens. In 2009, the Austin Police Department added additional investigators, and the Human Trafficking Unit became the Human Trafficking & Vice Unit; and

WHEREAS, Allies Against Slavery (Allies) was founded by Austin community leaders and members of CTCAHT in 2010 to catalyze and sustain a local movement to end human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, the mission of Allies is to end human trafficking by mobilizing communities, supporting local trafficking survivors, and promoting large-scale system transformation; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, Allies is developing the Slave-Free City Network, a working group intended to be a multi-disciplinary, coordinated network of partner agencies and community members representing eight sectors of Austin including criminal justice, business, faith, government, education, arts and media, non-

governmental organizations and family, and medical, in order to provide an overall strategy for addressing human trafficking by implementing comprehensive solutions across a continuum that includes prevention, discovery of victims, recovery, and beyond recovery; and

WHEREAS, partnerships to develop Slave-Free Cities must include active engagement between community members and city personnel; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Slavery Mapping Project, a research partnership formed in 2014 by the University of Texas Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, the University of Texas Bureau of Business Research, and Allies, backed by the Office of the Governor, is dedicated to empirically determining the nature and prevalence of human trafficking across Texas to educate and provide resources to municipalities, law enforcement agencies, service providers, and community members; and

WHEREAS, the vision of a Slave-Free City is to become a place where traffickers cannot exploit the vulnerable and where survivors can access the resources they need to truly heal; and

WHEREAS, this vision is consistent with the vision and values outlined in the Imagine Austin comprehensive plan adopted by the Austin City Council in June 2012, including that “Austin is livable,” that one of Austin’s foundations is its safe neighborhoods, that “Austin values and respects its people,” and that “We stand together for equal rights for all persons, especially acknowledging those who have been denied full participation in the opportunities offered by our community;” and

WHEREAS, Austin's commitment to this vision will demonstrate that human trafficking has no place in our city, that Austin actively protects and upholds the fundamental human rights of its residents and inhabitants, and that Austin endeavors to be a national leader in the movement to prevent human trafficking and care for victims and survivors of this crime; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

1. The City recognizes human trafficking is a human rights concern impacting Austin residents, businesses, and communities;
2. The City declares that freedom from human trafficking is a fundamental human right; and
3. The City promotes these principles and values through its policies, and continues to secure this human right on behalf of its residents.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to appoint a liaison to local groups that, as determined by the City Manager, are dedicated to collaborating with the City and others to achieve the shared goal of ending human trafficking in Austin; to incorporate information about preventing, identifying, and responding to human trafficking into existing training for City employees as may be appropriate; and to

develop plans and policies to prevent and reduce human trafficking related to all City tourism initiatives and City-sponsored events.

ADOPTED: October 15, 2015

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk