Assembly Resolution No. 792

BY: M. of A. Cunningham

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim January 11, 2024, as Human Trafficking Awareness Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official days that are set aside to increase awareness of serious issues that affect the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body hereby memorializes Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim January 11, 2024, as Human Trafficking Awareness Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Human Trafficking Awareness Day; and

WHEREAS, National Human Trafficking Awareness Day raises awareness of the persistent issue of human trafficking; though the entire month of January has already been recognized as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, this day is specifically dedicated to awareness and prevention of this heinous and illegal practice; and

WHEREAS, Since the Senate established this day of observance in 2007, it has drawn massive public support from individual donations to government-organized events; the horrific injustice of human trafficking can affect people of any race and background, and on this day, we are all called to fight human trafficking wherever it exists; and

WHEREAS, Human trafficking is the exploitation of another person for labor, domestic servitude, or commercial sexual activity by force, fraud, or coercion; it is also the act of enslaving or exploiting unwilling other people; and

WHEREAS, Unfortunately, slavery in some form has existed for hundreds of years - and persistently exists today, though many are unaware of this fact; most are familiar with the slave trade of the 1400s and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Instituted by Europeans, the slave trade captured and held in bondage millions of Africans from across the continent, eventually selling them for labor or sexual exploitation; this practice flourished in countries like Spain, the growing United States, Holland, France, Sweden, and Denmark for centuries; and

WHEREAS, It was not until the late 1700s and 1800s that governments began to declare the Transatlantic slave trade illegal; with Great Britain setting the example in 1807, and the United States following in 1820, the slave trade became a crime punishable by death but many years passed before more widespread freedom was achieved; and

WHEREAS, The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 largely put an end to slavery, and the Thirteenth Amendment of 1866 abolished it; and

WHEREAS, It was after the recognition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade as immoral that governments began to discuss "white slavery," the term used at the time for sexual human trafficking; the International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic was written into law by European monarchs in 1904; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, 12 countries signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic and the League of Nations soon changed the name from "white slavery" to "traffic in women and children"; and

WHEREAS, The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries saw gains for the movement against human trafficking; in 2000, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act addressed modern-day slavery, becoming the first federal law to do so; and

WHEREAS, The American charity group Free the Slaves, part of Anti-Slavery International, was also formed; and

WHEREAS, In 2007, the United States Senate ratified the resolution establishing January 11th as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, and in 2010, President Obama dedicated the entire month of January to awareness and prevention of human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, New York State has reported 404 cases of human trafficking, with 639 victims identified; and

WHEREAS, New York also has one of the highest sex trafficking statistics in the United State with 310 instances reported, while labor trafficking accounts for 37 cases; and

WHEREAS, As a major international transportation hub and densely populated state, New York provides an environment conducive to human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, Various organizations, government agencies, and community initiatives in the State of New York work to raise awareness, provide support to survivors, and dismantle trafficking networks; and

WHEREAS, Today, there are more than 50 established organizations which globally combat this illegal practice, and more awareness has been raised than ever before; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater public awareness of this serious issue, and more must be done to eradicate slavery and human trafficking at the local, State and national levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim January 11, 2024, as Human Trafficking Awareness Day in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be

transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul.