



STATE SENATOR
LaTonya Johnson

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE

6TH DISTRICT

Good afternoon Chairman Kooyenga and committee members,

Wisconsin has earned an unfortunate and appalling distinction as a national human trafficking hub. We are a state where pimps and traffickers come and steal our children off of our streets, forcing them into sexual slavery in circuits like Chicago, Las Vegas, and other parts of the country.

Given that truck drivers are literally where the rubber meets the road when human trafficking occurs along our highways, they can and do play a critical role in identifying and preventing traffickers who create victims through exploitation of our transportation system.

Truck stops and rest areas are two of the most common places where human trafficking can occur. According to the I-94 Human Trafficking Awareness Project, Interstate 94 is a known circuit by traffickers to transport victims from Chicago to Milwaukee, Madison, Eau Claire, Minneapolis, and the North Dakota oil fields. As a result, truck stops, rest stops, restaurants, gas stations, and hotels along the highway have become common places that victims frequent. Research indicates that education is the number one way to stop trafficking.

As of 2017, Wisconsin has 312,492 licensed commercial drivers. This is a huge network of eyes and ears within the interstate trade industry that can support law enforcement in the investigation, arrest, and prosecution of traffickers.

Recognizing the importance that truck drivers can play in identifying and preventing human trafficking, we have drafted this legislation which will establish industry-specific materials on the recognition and prevention of human trafficking for use in the instruction in driver education courses that provide instruction in the operation of commercial motor vehicles. This will affect new drivers only.

Under this legislation, the Wisconsin Department of Justice, in consultation with the Wisconsin Technical College System Board and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, shall identify and establish industry specific materials for use in the instruction of the recognition and prevention of human trafficking.

We drafted this legislation in consultation with the Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association and Truckers Against Trafficking, a nationwide organization that educates and mobilizes members of the trucking and travel plaza industry to combat domestic sex trafficking. They have developed an industry training program used by commercial motor vehicle instructors across the nation that can be viewed on their website.

Thus far, this legislation has earned the support of a broad coalition of stakeholders, including End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, Schneider National Inc., Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Association of Family and Children's Agencies, Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association, Wisconsin Catholic Conference, Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, National Association of Social Workers-Wisconsin Chapter, and Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin.

Alberta Darling
Wisconsin State Senator
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges, Children and Families

Senate Bill 25

Tuesday, April 23, 2019

Thank you Chair Kooyenga and committee members for taking the time to hear Senate Bill 25. This bill is crucial to continuing our state's fight against human trafficking.

In an effort to spread awareness of human trafficking, Senate Bill 25 requires technical colleges to include training on the prevention and recognition of human trafficking for truckers.

Reports of sex trafficking in Wisconsin are rising every year. In 2016, the National Human Trafficking Hotline received 261 calls reporting 91 human trafficking cases in Wisconsin. According to the Department of Children and Families, substantiated cases of trafficking of our youth in the state's protective services rose from 8 cases in 2017 to 22 cases in 2018.

Sex trafficking has been reported in all 72 counties in Wisconsin. It is not an urban issue, nor a rural issue. Unfortunately, it is an issue that effects every corner of our state.

Our state's truckers can become a real resource in the fight against human trafficking. After similar legislation passed in Texas, the state saw a spike in reporting of human trafficking by truckers. Before this bill passed in Texas, only three calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in Texas were from truckers. By the end of 2016, truckers had made nearly 2,000 calls, making them one of the fastest growing demographics of callers nationwide.

Senate Bill 25 recognizes the valuable role our state's trucking industry can have to combat human trafficking. By providing truckers with the education and tools to prevent and recognize the signs of human trafficking, we can join the eight other states who have passed similar legislation in hopes of identifying and helping more victims of trafficking.

I'd like to thank Senator Johnson and Representative Thiesfeldt for their leadership on this issue. I'm glad to join them in our bi-partisan work to fight human trafficking in Wisconsin. I hope to count on your support for Senate Bill 25.



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TO: Chairman Kooyenga and Members of the Senate Committee on Colleges, Universities, Children and Families

FROM: Fredi Bove, Policy Initiatives Advisor, Department of Children and Families

DATE: April 23, 2019

SUBJECT: 2019 Senate Bill 25

I am Fredi Bove, Policy Initiatives Advisor for the Department of Children and Families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 25, which requires that instruction in the recognition and prevention of human trafficking be included in commercial motor vehicle driver education courses. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) supports SB 25.

Human and sex trafficking are occurring throughout Wisconsin. Human trafficking, which includes sex trafficking of children and youth, is a horrific crime and a growing phenomenon nationally and in Wisconsin. Sex trafficking of minors is occurring in communities throughout our state, including in urban, rural, and tribal areas. While some minors who experience sex trafficking are from foreign countries, many—if not most—minors who fall prey to sex trafficking in our state are Wisconsin citizens.

The Department of Children and Families is strongly committed to combatting sex trafficking. In collaboration with the Department of Justice and other stakeholders, DCF has pursued a multi-pronged approach to develop and implement a robust, coordinated and comprehensive trauma-informed response and service system for children and youth who are at risk of or have experienced sex trafficking. From December 2015-December 2017 DCF partnered with the Department of Justice (DOJ) to co-chair the Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force which was composed of a broad range of stakeholders from across

Wisconsin. The Task Force strengthened cross-systems collaboration and supported a number of strategies to combat human trafficking.

Public awareness and training are essential in combatting human trafficking. Two key strategies supported by the Task Force and pursued by DCF are: (1) heightening public awareness about the occurrence of human trafficking in Wisconsin and its impacts; and (2) providing training to adults who may come into contact with human trafficking. As a major public awareness activity, DCF ran a statewide public awareness campaign from June to August 2018 based on the theme “WI, We Need to Talk.” This public awareness campaign was targeted to adult members of the public and effectively utilized print and digital billboards, posters, indoor advertising, and media interviews. With respect to the training strategy, DCF developed a training curriculum on human trafficking for: (a) child welfare workers and (b) professionals who are in youth-serving settings, such as youth runaway and homeless shelters and child welfare congregate care facilities. In a unique and innovative partnership, DCF and DOJ collaborated with the Wisconsin Hotel and Lodging Association to develop a webinar for staff in the hotel industry, given that trafficking often occurs in hotel settings. The webinar provides information to all types of hotel staff about the signs of potential trafficking and the importance of and protocol for reporting these signs so that law enforcement can undertake appropriate follow-up steps.

Truck stops are another setting where sex trafficking occurs. For this reason, SB 25 builds on past efforts and is an important step forward in advancing the key anti-human trafficking strategies of heightening awareness that human trafficking is occurring in Wisconsin and providing training to adults who may come into contact with trafficking.

The Department thanks Senator Johnson and Representative Thiesfeldt for sponsoring this bill and thanks the Committee for your consideration of the Department’s testimony.