



PHOTO BRIEF:

New Law Will Aid Fight Against Human Trafficking

AUGUST 4, 2017 – Legislation enacted Tuesday will strengthen Delaware's laws against human trafficking.

[Senate Bill 75](#) (as amended) aligns the state's human trafficking crime with the federal Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015.

Under the law, "trafficking an individual" is a class C felony if the victim is an adult. The offense rises to a class B felony if the victim is under the age of 18.

Sen. Bryant Richardson, R-Laurel, one of the prime sponsors of the legislation, said it sends a message to those engaged in slavery: "Delaware is determined to stop your evil trade."

State Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown, a co-sponsor of the bill, said many Delawareans are surprised to learn this is taking place in the First State.

According to [Polaris](#), a private group working to eradicate modern slavery, human trafficking is being practiced throughout the U.S. The [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#), a 24-hour service operated by the organization, took 26,727 calls last year with

7,572 trafficking cases reported nationally. Twenty-one of those cases were in Delaware.

At the bill signing event in Dover, Delaware Department of Safety & Homeland Security Secretary Robert Coupe said progress has been made, recounting several recent arrests in cases where women had been held against their will and pressed into sexual servitude. He said law enforcement is using social media and working with non-profit agencies to raise awareness of the issue with the public and to help victims understand where they can turn for help.

Among the sponsors and co-sponsors of the new law are: State Reps. Mike Ramone, R-Pike Creek; Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown; Rich Collins, R-Millsboro; Tim Dukes, R-Laurel; Ron Gray, R-Selbyville; Deborah Hudson, R-Fairthorne; and Dave Wilson, R-Cedar Creek Hundred.