

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, human trafficking is a crime that preys on the vulnerable, in which victims are forced to work in various forms of labor exploitation including, but not limited to, commercial sex acts and other services that are induced through force, fraud, and coercion; and

WHEREAS, according to the International Labour Organization, human trafficking is a \$150 billion criminal industry that denies freedom to 40.3 million people around the world. One in four victims are children. Women and girls account for “99 percent of victims in the commercial sex industry and 58 percent in other sectors;” and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Department of State, “human trafficking disproportionately impacts racial and ethnic minorities, women and girls, LGBTQ+ individuals, vulnerable migrants, and other historically marginalized and underserved communities”; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking originates where there is an absence of human rights and root causes can include poverty, homelessness, structural or interpersonal violence, gender identity, insecurity related to armed conflict, or economic inequality; and

WHEREAS, the U.N. Environment Programme estimates that “human trafficking has the potential to increase by 20- 30 percent during humanitarian disasters due to lost livelihoods and disrupted families” that are caused by climate change; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received more than 19,000 reports of possible child sex trafficking in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, 583 contacts were made to the National Human Trafficking Hotline regarding human trafficking from Virginia and 140 cases of human trafficking with 179 victims were identified in Virginia, with the vast majority involving sex trafficking, women, and foreign nationals; and

WHEREAS, in 2022 and 2023 Shared Hope International gave Virginia an “F” (the lowest possible grade) when it comes to laws protecting children from sex trafficking and providing victims justice; and

WHEREAS, the Alexandria Commission for Women, the Alexandria City Council, the Alexandria Gang Prevention Community Task Force, the American Association of University Women, the Alexandria United Methodist Women, and the Alexandria Human Rights Commission call on all who reside and work in the City of Alexandria to remain vigilant, report any form of human trafficking, support interventions and services that protect and empower survivors of such abuse and exploitation, and support increased funding for prevention and training related to human trafficking; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JUSTIN M. WILSON, Mayor of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, and on behalf of the Alexandria City Council, do hereby proclaim and recognize the observance of January 11, 2024, as:

“HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS DAY”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JUSTIN M. WILSON, Mayor of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, and on behalf of the Alexandria City Council, do hereby proclaim and recognize the observance of January 2024, as:

“NATIONAL SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH”

In the City of Alexandria and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Alexandria to be affixed this 9th day of January 2024.

MAYOR JUSTIN M. WILSON
On behalf of the City Council
of Alexandria, Virginia

ATTEST:

Gloria A. Sitton, CMC City Clerk