

**P R O C L A M A T I O N**

**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 Bureau of Justice, of the human trafficking cases reported between January 2008 and June 2010, sex trafficking victims were more likely to be white (26%) or black (40%), compared to labor trafficking victims, who were more likely to be Hispanic (63%) or Asian (17%); and sex traffickers target children in foster care and group homes because they are more vulnerable to exploitation due to the trauma they have experienced and the lack of a permanent, stable home; and no one is immune from trafficking, as it crosses all racial, social, and economic levels, and commercial sexual exploitation of children is the most common form of human trafficking in America; and

**WHEREAS**, the United Nations Office on Drug and Crimes noted in early 2021 that an increase in trafficking is expected as a result COVID-19 recession, “millions of women, children and men worldwide are out of work, out of school and without social support in the continuing COVID-19 crisis, leaving them at greater risk of human trafficking. We need targeted action to stop criminal traffickers from taking advantage of the pandemic to exploit the vulnerable;” 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 2021, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) received more than 17,200 reports of child sex trafficking in the United States, estimated that 1 out of 6 endangered runaways that were reported to them were likely child sex trafficking victims, 7% of those cases reported to NCMEC were boys, and 17 percent of whom were in the care of social services or foster care when they ran away; and since 2007, Polaris, a leader in the fight to eradicate modern slavery, has operated the National Human Trafficking Hotline; and since the hotline has been in existence, it has received 245,566 calls, which have resulted in 73,949 cases of alleged human trafficking being opened; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Human Trafficking Hotline further reports that since 2007, there have been a total of 328,255 contacts received by the hotline concerning alleged human trafficking in Virginia, which resulted in 73,946 cases being opened: and 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**, upon the motion of the Virginia State Crime Commission on January 5, 2021 supports the full recommendation of the creation of a statute which allows victims to vacate prostitution and maintaining bawdy place convictions and petitions courts for expungement of charges of victims of sex trafficking related to those exploitations; and upon the motion of the Virginia State Crime Commission on January 5, 2021 supports the full recommendation dividing Virginia's prostitution statute into two separate code sections to better distinguish between prostitution and solicitation of prostitution, which will allow for more accurate data collection and allow for clearer identification of the supply and demand components of the commercial sex trafficking industry; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2022 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, which is a decline in progress from the “C” grade Virginia earned as recently as 2019; 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, and support interventions and services that protect and empower survivors of such abuse and exploitation; 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, 2023, 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 2023, 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 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 2023.

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

ATTEST:

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Gloria A. Sitton, CMC     City Clerk