

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, human trafficking is a crime against humanity 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 violence, threats, fraud, coercion and other manipulative tactics; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking, according to the International Labor Organization, is a multi-billion dollar criminal industry that denies freedom to 20.9 million people around the world, including here in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, 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 runaway and homeless youth are its primary victims; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received 4.4 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation, estimating that 1 out of every 5 teen runaways is recruited for commercial sexual exploitation, and in 2015, human trafficking occurred in all 50 states, with the top venue for sex trafficking was commercial front brothels and the top industry for labor trafficking was domestic work; and

WHEREAS, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center notes that since 2007, Virginia has had over 706 reports of human trafficking, and more than 75 percent of the traffickers used social media both to recruit victims, as well as to advertise them to buyers and some victims were as young as 13, and according to the Justice Department, more than half of known victims in the U.S. are younger than 17; and

WHEREAS, Virginia is one of ten states that make the most calls to the National Human Trafficking Resource Centers Hotline and a large number of these calls are made from Northern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of the Alexandria Commission for Women, the Alexandria City Council, the Alexandria Gang Prevention Community Task Force, Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Task Force, and the American Association of University Women, Alexandria Branch, call on all who reside and work the City of Alexandria to become vigilant and report any form of human trafficking, and support both interventions and services to protect and empower survivors of such abuse and exploitation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ALLISON SILBERBERG, Mayor of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, and on behalf of the Alexandria City Council, do hereby recognize the month of January 2017 as:

"NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH"

And are strongly committed to providing services to protect human trafficking survivors, bring traffickers to justice, and raise awareness of this issue through a comprehensive system of safety and support for all those affected.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Alexandria to be affixed this 10th day of January, 2017.

ALLISON SILBERBERG MAYOR

On behalf of the City Council
of Alexandria, Virginia

ATTEST:

Jacqueline M. Henderson, MMC City Clerk