

HCS HB 1246 -- HUMAN TRAFFICKING

SPONSOR: Pike

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 9 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules-Legislative Oversight Committee by a vote of 12 to 0.

The bill requires various establishments, specified in the bill, to display a poster that provides information regarding human trafficking, including what it is and what resources victims have for getting help, in a conspicuous place near the entrance of the establishment, starting March 1, 2019. Any establishment required to display the poster that fails to do so will be subject to the penalty provisions of this bill.

The Department of Public Safety shall create the poster before January 1, 2019, and make it available for print on the department's website.

This bill is similar to HB 261 (2017).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that requiring various businesses to display posters containing hotline information will help inform the public about human trafficking, will help kids get back to their families, and will help victims identify the fact that they are victims. There are currently 28 states that require or encourage displaying trafficking hotline posters, and these help victims figure out where to turn for help. In 2016, in Missouri, there were hundreds of calls made and emails sent to report human trafficking. In the last year alone, 40% of the calls made pertained to children. It is extremely important that law enforcement receive these tips because human trafficking is a secretive, under the radar kind of offense.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Pike; National Association of Social Workers-Mo Chapter; Missouri Kids First; Missouri Attorney General's Office; Nanette Ward, Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition; Casey Alvarez, Go 61; Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Sexual Violence; Missouri Coalition Of Children's Agencies; Missouri Immigrant & Refugee Advocates; Office Of Child Advocate; Department of Public Safety; and Marilen Pitler, National Council of Jewish Women.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.