

(H. B. 2043)

(No. 87-2015)

(Approved June 17, 2015)

AN ACT

To declare February of each year as the “Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,” including the observance of “Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Day” on the 3rd Monday of February each year, in order to educate and raise awareness among Puerto Rico residents of the existence thereof, its effects, and the ways to contribute to its eradication; and for other purposes.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

Several years ago, the University of Puerto Rico and the Ricky Martin Foundation published a study entitled “Human Trafficking in Puerto Rico,” directed by Dr. César Rey and Dr. Luisa Hernández-Angueira. The same states that: “The problem of human trafficking is a global phenomenon that affects the entire population, so international efforts are needed in order to eradicate it.” [translation supplied] According to the “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women And Children,” which complements the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, human trafficking or trafficking in persons means “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs.”

There is no database in the Island that corroborates or produces statistics with regards to human trafficking. For this reason, Dr. César Rey points out in his study that “a lack of conceptual understanding of the problem of human trafficking is notable among government agencies and the general public in Puerto Rico, with many denying the problem’s existence.” Consequently, the Legislative Assembly of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is committed to eradicating and raising awareness of the existence, effects, and consequences of human trafficking. Therefore, it hereby declares February of each year as the “Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.” This Act also provides that the “Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Day” shall be observed on the 3rd Monday of February of each year in order to educate and increase awareness among Puerto Rico residents of the existence of the problem, as well as its effects and the ways to contribute to its eradication.

During said month, government agencies and citizens in general are encouraged to join efforts in educating, informing, and raising awareness of human trafficking prevention and the effects thereof in Puerto Rico.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1. – Title.

This Act shall be known as the “Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Act.”

Section 2. – February of each year is hereby declared as the “Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.”

Section 3. – The third Monday of February of each year is hereby declared as the “Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Day in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.”

Section 4. – The Governor of Puerto Rico shall fulfill the purposes of this Act and, through a proclamation to such effect, shall encourage the People of Puerto Rico to hold activities every year during said month to raise awareness of the importance of educating, informing, and raising awareness of human trafficking prevention and the effects thereof in Puerto Rico.

Section 5. – The Department of Education and the Department of the Family are hereby empowered and designated as the government entities in charge of joining efforts to educate, inform, and raise the people’s awareness of human trafficking prevention and the effects thereof in Puerto Rico through fairs, workshops, seminars, presentations, and prevention programs.

Section 6. – This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following **Act No. 87-2015 (H. B. 2043)** of the **5th Regular Session** of the **17th Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico**:

AN ACT to declare February of each year as the “Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,” including the observance of “Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Day” on the 3rd Monday of February each year, in order to educate and raise awareness among Puerto Rico residents of the existence thereof, its effects, and the ways to contribute to its eradication; and for other purposes.

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, on this 14th day of November, 2017.

Orlando Pagán-Ramírez
Acting Director