

National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

Whereas

National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month was first proclaimed in 2016 to call attention to the injustice of modern slavery and human trafficking that still occurs in too many places around the world—including in the United States; and

Whereas

as we continue our fight to deliver on the promise of freedom, we commemorate the Emancipation Proclamation, which became effective on January 1, 1863, and the 13th Amendment, which was sent to the States for ratification on February 1, 1865. Throughout the month of January 2021, we highlight the many fronts in the ongoing battle for civil rights—including the efforts of the Hidalgo County Criminal District Attorney's Office and the Rio Grande Valley Anti-Human Trafficking Taskforce, which is comprised of Federal, State, Regional and local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, victim service agencies, and social service providers in Hidalgo County, who are working to end human trafficking; and

Whereas

the victims of Human Trafficking are men and women, adults and children; all are denied basic human dignity and freedom. Victims can be abused in their own countries, or find themselves far from home and vulnerable. Whether they are trapped in forced sexual or labor exploitation, human trafficking victims cannot walk away, but are held in service through force, threats, and fear. All too often suffering from horrible physical and sexual abuse, it is hard for them to imagine that there might be a place of refuge; and

Whereas

we must join together as a community in Hidalgo County to provide a safe haven by protecting victims and prosecuting traffickers. With improved victim identification, medical and social services, training for first responders, and increased public awareness, the men, women, and children who have suffered this scourge can overcome the bonds of modern slavery, receive protection and justice, and successfully reclaim their rightful independence; and

Whereas

fighting of human trafficking is a shared responsibility. This month, we urge all Hidalgo County residents to educate themselves about all forms of modern slavery and the signs and consequences of human trafficking. Together, we can and must end this most serious, ongoing criminal civil rights violation.

Now therefore, be it resolved

that the Hidalgo County Commissioner's Court does hereby proclaim January 2021 as National Slavery & Human Trafficking Prevention Month culminating with National Freedom Day on February 1 and calls upon the people of the Hidalgo County to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities and to recognize the vital role we can play in ending human trafficking.

Approved this 12th day of January, 2021.

RICHARD F. CORTEZ
County Judge

DAVID L. FUENTES
County Commissioner, Pct. 1

EDUARDO "EDDIE" CANTU
County Commissioner, Pct. 2

EVERARDO "EVER" VILLARREAL
County Commissioner, Pct. 3

ELLIE TORRES
County Commissioner, Pct. 4

Attest: ARTURO GUAJARDO, JR.
County Clerk