

The Connecticut General Assembly

House Democrats



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Contact: Sam Norton
860-240-8579

STATE REP. STAFSTROM LEADS PASSAGE OF BILL AIMED AT FIGHTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

State Rep. Steve Stafstrom (D-Bridgeport), vice chairman of the Judiciary Committee, led House passage of [House Bill 7309](#), which aims to combat human trafficking through increased penalties, training and awareness.

The bill, which was unanimously approved by the House of Representatives, now heads to the Senate for consideration. If approved, H.B. 7309 would make sex trafficking a class A felony under state law, punishable by up to 25 years in prison. It would also create a new class B felony charge of commercial sexual abuse of a minor.

“Human trafficking is on the rise in Connecticut. It is imperative that we put harsher penalties in place so human traffickers are brought to justice. Making sex trafficking a class A felony will also deter people from committing this horrific crime,” **Stafstrom** said.

In 2015, the [Department of Children and Families reported](#) that the agency received 133 referrals of suspected child victims of sex trafficking. In 2016, this number skyrocketed. The department said that it received 202 referrals of youth who are either at risk or confirmed victims of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

“We need to make sure the necessary measures are in place to prevent one less child from becoming a victim of human trafficking,” **Stafstrom** said.

The bill also seeks to appoint an adult victim of human trafficking to the Trafficking in Persons Council from the Governor’s Office. By requiring state officials to provide health counseling and support programs to victims of human trafficking, those affected can get the help they need.

The bill also seeks to expand the entities required to post signs about human trafficking. If an establishment does not post the proper notice, they would be subject to a fine.

“Countless establishments across the state knowingly or unknowingly support human trafficking. These policy changes are necessary to send the message that this crime has no place in Connecticut,” **Stafstrom** said. “I thank the bipartisan group of legislators and advocates who worked so hard to craft this legislation.”