



# Wisconsin State Legislature

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*Embargoed release:*

September 30, 2007

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## **Reps. Kessler, Jeskewitz; Sens. Grothman, Coggs To Introduce Anti-Human Trafficking Legislation**

MADISON - Representatives Frederick P. Kessler and Suzanne Jeskewitz and Senators Glenn Grothman and Spencer Coggs will introduce an anti-human trafficking bill in the Wisconsin State Legislature on Monday, October 1, 2007. Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery in which victims are sexually exploited or conscripted as slave labor through force, fraud or coercion. Approximately 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year. Human trafficking is the third largest criminal industry in the world today, after arms and drug dealing. The proposed bill will criminalize trafficking of adults and children and provide essential protections for victims.

“Our bill will give the state the ability to fight human trafficking in Wisconsin,” said Kessler. “With this legislation the Office of Justice Assistance will gather the data that law enforcement needs to effectively combat trafficking. It also ensures that district attorneys and the Attorney General’s office will be able to prosecute perpetrators and that victims will be provided with the protections they need to recover and safely report to law enforcement.”

In 2000 Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). However, due to a lack of federal resources, investigation and prosecution of human trafficking has been limited. “There is a significant need for states to create their own trafficking laws in order to effectively combat trafficking at the state level,” said Grothman.

Proponents of the bill have stressed the need for anti-human trafficking legislation. “There has been a grassroots effort to push for tougher laws that deal with this issue,” said Rep. Jeskewitz. “Local sexual assault service providers and domestic violence shelters have noticed an increase in the number of human trafficking victims they serve. Legislative action is needed to protect these vulnerable members of our communities.”

“Trafficking involves the most inhuman and degrading treatment imaginable,” said Sen. Coggs. “These crimes don’t respect international borders and we have victims right here in Wisconsin. This brutal crime must be addressed.” More than one-half of the states (35) have passed anti-trafficking legislation and at least another 8 states have legislation pending as of July 2007.

This legislation will circulate for co-sponsorship on Monday, October 1, 2007 with the intent of introducing companion bills in both houses by mid-October. A strong bi-partisan support for the bills is anticipated.

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