



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For Further Information Contact:

January 16, 2008

Representative Frederick P. Kessler
608.266.5813

**Rep. Kessler Applauds the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Corrections,
and Housing for forwarding Anti-Human Trafficking Legislation**

MADISON – State Representative Frederick P. Kessler (D-Milwaukee) applauds the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Corrections, and Housing for forwarding the Anti-Human Trafficking legislation, Senate Bill 292. The committee voted today 5 - 0 in support of this bill that would extend the state the ability to fight human trafficking in Wisconsin.

Representative Kessler introduced the Anti-Human Trafficking legislation in October with Representative Jeskewitz, Senators Grothman and Coggs, and a bipartisan list of forty-three other legislators. Kessler was also the principal author of the human trafficking proposal in the 2005-06 legislative session.

“I am very pleased that this bill was unanimously voted out of committee, and I am hopeful that the bill will soon receive a vote on the Senate floor,” Representative Kessler said.

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. AB 544/SB 292 will criminalize trafficking of adults and children and provide essential protections for victims.

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. This is why it is important that Wisconsin enacts this law so that our Attorney General and the District Attorneys across the state have sufficient laws on the books so that they can effectively prosecute this crime.

Supporters of this legislation include the Association of State Prosecutors, the Milwaukee Police Association, the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault. The bill received a public hearing in December before the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice, however that committee has still not voted on the proposal.

“With the passage of this bill, Wisconsin will be taking a major step toward combating human trafficking at the state level,” Representative Kessler added.

###