



# JERRY L. O'CONNOR

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 52<sup>nd</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 267-9152  
Toll-Free: (888) 529-0052  
Rep.O'Connor@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708-8953

**November 25, 2024**

## **PRESENTATION TO HEMAD**

Thank you for the invitation today. I am highly impressed with the HEMAD initiative, which not surprisingly, is a program fostered by Dr. Debbie Lassiter and the Convergence Resource Center in Milwaukee.

In this past legislative session, I Chaired the Speaker's Task Force on Human Trafficking where we focused on teenage sex trafficking. For the members of our 15-member Task Force, this was an eye-opening experience. Sex trafficking is far more pervasive than the public is even remotely aware of. What we learned made us MAD!

Sex trafficking is found in every county in Wisconsin. While working with sex trafficking victim support organizations around the state, we found that the real victim numbers far outpace the official statistics. The life-long scars from young girls and women are excruciatingly painful and hard to overcome.

Our Task Force introduced eight bills that address Sex Trafficking. The Governor signed three bills into law. The Assembly unanimously passed the remaining five bills. These bills did not fit into the Senate calendar.

Therefore, in January, we are working with the various bill authors to re-introduce these five bills. We will continue the fight to make real changes for those individuals involved in the sex trafficking trade. Our goal remains to set the captives free! We will be working with organizations like Convergence to make this happen.

One critical issue that the Legislature cannot address is the one HEMAD has undertaken. It is designed to get MEN MAD. This requires a change of hearts and a re-focus of our energies to protect the vulnerable caught up in sex trafficking. The goal is to STOP the trade by stopping the users, abusers, and buyers of sex.

Yesterday during the Packers game, I signed the HEMAD pledge. I challenge you to do the same and pass it on to at least two other men before the day ends.

Thank you.