

> > STATE OF NEW YORK FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: EXECUTIVE CHAMBER

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> > ELIOT SPITZER, GOVERNOR

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> >        AGREEMENT REACHED ON ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

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> > Governor Eliot Spitzer, Lieutenant Governor David Paterson and legislative leaders today announced an agreement on legislation that will combat the trafficking of human beings. The legislation makes Sex Trafficking and Labor Trafficking felony-level crimes and provides access to state social services for trafficking victims.

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> > The United States Department of State has estimated that between 18,000 and 20,000 people are trafficked into the United States each year for forced labor, involuntary domestic servitude, or sexual exploitation. New York is known to be a frequent port of entry for such activity. Trafficking also originates domestically, and both types of trafficking frequently involve children.

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> > To fight these forms of modern-day slavery, New York now joins the federal government and 24 other states that have enacted anti-human trafficking legislation. Under the legislation, traffickers who advance or profit from prostitution activity by compelling, inducing, deceiving or forcing their victims into prostitution activity can be convicted of the class B felony of Sex Trafficking. Traffickers who exploit workers using similar types of coercive activity can be convicted of the class D felony of Labor Trafficking.

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> > Under the new legislation, victims of trafficking who are not otherwise eligible for social services, either because they are not United States citizens or because they are foreign nationals who have not yet been certified as eligible for federal assistance programs, can now receive social service assistance from the state. These services include case management, emergency temporary housing, health and mental health care, drug addiction screening and treatment, language and translation services, and job training. They also include coordination with the federal government to obtain special visas that allow the victims in the United States to testify against the traffickers, eventually becoming eligible for refugee status.

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> > The new legislation also provides for the following:

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> >   \* Creation of an interagency task force to coordinate implementation of the new law, collect data on trafficking, and recommend best practices for training and community outreach to help law enforcement, social service providers, prosecutors, defense attorneys and the general public to recognize trafficking situations. The Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) has already begun training for prosecutors and law enforcement agencies.

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> >   \* Clarifying in statute that knowingly selling travel-related services to facilitate prostitution - a business known as "prostitution tourism"- is the class D felony of Promoting Prostitution in the Third Degree.

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> >   \* Suppressing the demand for prostitution by elevating the lowest-level patronizing a prostitute crime from a B to an A misdemeanor.

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> > "Updating and enhancing our human-trafficking laws to adequately punish the perpetrators of these unspeakable crimes and sufficiently support victims is critically important," said Governor Spitzer. "New York is finally joining the ranks of other states in ensuring that those

who exploit innocent people and children and cause extreme suffering are subject to strict punishment under state law."

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> > Lieutenant Governor David A. Paterson said: "This legislation does more than protect victims and punish perpetrators. This law sends a clear message to those who suffer this form of modern-day slavery: you are not at fault, you can start over, and you are not alone. Empowering victims by providing access to services for which they might otherwise be ineligible gives them a real chance to overcome their hardship."

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> > Speaker Sheldon Silver said: "Human trafficking is an international scourge that defies human decency. As a society, we are all diminished when human suffering goes unchecked. This agreement sends a crystal, clear message to those who prey upon the innocent: this abhorrent, criminal behavior simply will not be tolerated in New York State. I commend the determined efforts of Assembly Codes Committee Chair Joseph Lentol, bill sponsor Jeffrey Dinowitz and Assembly member Amy Paulin in bringing this agreement to fruition. The Assembly expects to move swiftly to ensure this bill becomes law so that victims are protected and criminals receive harsh punishment."

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> > Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno said: "Human trafficking is nothing more than modern-day slavery. The Senate has passed human trafficking legislation unanimously for three years in a row. This legislation will punish the despicable people who engage in human trafficking and provide assistance and support to the victims. I congratulate Senator Frank Padavan who has championed this issue for five years for his work in reaching this agreement."

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> > Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith said: "The agreement we've reached will not only increase penalties for those who commit the heinous crime of human trafficking, but will also help the victims, who often have no where to go and no one to turn to when they have been rescued. This measure will give them an opportunity to rebuild their lives and regain their dignity."

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> > Assembly Minority Leader James Tedisco said: "This is a good law. Unfortunately this sick practice does exist in the shadows and dark corners of some places in New York. It needs to be exposed. Those responsible need to be severely punished and victims need to be protected and rehabilitated."

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> > Michael E. Bongiorno, Rockland County District Attorney said: "I am glad that the New York State District Attorneys Association was able to work with Governor Spitzer, the state legislature and victim advocate organizations to draft human trafficking legislation. It may be difficult for the average citizen to comprehend, but even in this day and age there are people who are forced into prostitution or labor servitude. This law will provide law enforcement and prosecutors the tools they need to successfully investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases."

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> > Executive Director of Equality Now Taina Bien-Aimé said: "Equality Now and the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition are delighted to learn that New York State is soon to adopt a strong anti-trafficking law. This bill would not have been possible without the extraordinary leadership of Governor Eliot Spitzer and his deeply dedicated staff, as well as the vision and commitment of Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno. Among other provisions, the New York State bill comprehensively addresses the prosecution of traffickers and the protection of its victims, elements that will make it a model law and the strongest state anti-trafficking legislation in the Nation."

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> > Chairperson of the Downstate Coalition for Crime Victims Susan Xenarios said: "The Downstate Coalition for Crime Victims supports comprehensive NYS human anti-trafficking legislation which not only criminalizes this heinous act but also addresses the services needed for victims and the training needed for law enforcement and service providers. This bill is the culmination of the collaborative efforts of criminal justice, law enforcement and victim rights organizations in NYS. We applaud the Governor and the state legislature for respecting the urgency and moving quickly on this bill."

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