



Joan Huffman  
Senator ★ District 17

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Contact: Austin Arceneaux, 512/463-0117  
austin.arceneaux@senate.texas.gov

## **Senator Huffman Announces Legislation to Combat Human Trafficking**

Austin— Today, Senator Joan Huffman (R - Houston) announced that she has filed Senate Bills 20, 1801, 1802, and 1803 each with a unique approach to ending human trafficking in Texas.

"The Texas Legislature is doing its part to end human trafficking. I am working with the Governor and Lt. Governor, my colleagues, law enforcement, survivor advocates, and other stakeholders to pass these bills into law," said Senator Huffman. "Protecting vulnerable Texans and punishing those who engage in human trafficking are top priorities of mine. These bills will make a significant impact throughout the state once they are signed into law."

Senate Bill 20 codifies the fourteen recommendations from the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force report, issued in December, 2018. These recommendations crack down on illicit massage businesses, enhance investigative and prosecutorial tools, and protect trafficking victims. The report can be viewed at <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/divisions/criminal-justice/HumanTraffickingReport-2018.pdf>.

Senate Bill 1801 provides to trafficking survivors a one-time ability to make confidential records of crimes that their traffickers forced them to commit. Senate Bill 1802 creates enhanced punishments for sex trafficking crimes, and provides new prosecutorial tools to fight those crimes. Senate Bill 1803 ensures that traffickers are required to spend time in jail when convicted of their crimes.

Governor Greg Abbott said, "We must do everything we can to eliminate human trafficking in Texas and to protect the survivors of these horrific crimes. I applaud Senator Huffman for her leadership in developing solutions that crack down on human trafficking, put dangerous criminals behind bars, and provide care and rehabilitation services for victims. Together, we will send a message that the ideals of freedom, justice, and human dignity will always prevail in the State of Texas."

Senator Huffman has filed several other human trafficking bills this session. SB 458 requires human trafficking training for members of boards of trustees and superintendents of independent school districts. SB 498 creates remedies for businesses who rent office space close to human trafficking enterprises to get out of their lease, and enhances the ability of landlords to dismiss tenants who engage in human trafficking practices. SB 696 streamlines requirements for peace officers to complete mandatory training on human trafficking. SB 923 prohibits persons younger than 21 years of age from working at a sexually oriented business, and creates a common nuisance for sexually oriented businesses that allow children younger than 18 on their premises. SB 1257 develops the attorney general's authority to investigate and prosecute trafficking crimes, concurrently with local prosecutors.

*(Senator Joan Huffman represents District 17, which includes portions of Brazoria, Fort Bend and Harris counties. Huffman currently serves as Chair of the Senate Committee on State Affairs, Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, as a member of the Senate Committee on Finance and the Senate Committee on Administration, and as a member of the Legislative Budget Board.)*

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