

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
ATTORNEY GENERAL



Office of The Attorney General  
**State of Connecticut**

**TESTIMONY OF  
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 24, 2006**

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in strong support of Senate Bill 153, An Act Concerning the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons, and Senate Bill 154, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons.

Trafficking in women and children is an insidious and inhumane crime. It is by its very nature difficult to detect and prosecute. Trafficking often involves illegal aliens who have no family or friends. Traffickers make sure that the victims are totally dependent on them. Victims are forced to engage in criminal activity such as prostitution. Traffickers threaten their victims with deportation. Law enforcement is often perceived as the enemy.

No reliable statistics show the extent of trafficking in Connecticut but it is certainly one of the fastest growing crimes in the world. The United States Department of State so regards it, and estimates that as many as 18,000 people may be trafficked in the United States each year.

Senate Bills 153 and 154 reflects the recommendations of the Connecticut Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons:

1. establishing trafficking as a class B felony;
2. enacting tough civil penalties for trafficking victims who are forced into slave labor;
3. creating a private right of action for the victim to sue the trafficker;
4. protecting a trafficking victim who is forced into the sex trade from a criminal charges of prostitution;
5. providing funding for victim services and law enforcement training, and
6. extending and expanding the interagency task force.

I commend Senator Andrea Stillman for her advocacy of this cause and her leadership on the task force. My office served as a member of this task force. We heard from many different people about the trafficking problem. In our recommendations we heeded calls for broader recognition among law enforcement of trafficking and greater collaboration among federal, state and local law enforcement. We heeded victim advocates about the need for services and more effective communication between law enforcement and victim advocates.

Adoption of the provisions of Senate Bill 154 would provide a significant, powerful deterrent against trafficking in Connecticut. Traffickers would now face felony charges, forfeiture of all assets used in the trafficking enterprise, civil action by my office and the Labor Department and potential civil action by the victims.

The extension and expansion of the task force will provide a forum for necessary collaboration among federal, state, local and private agencies and accountability and oversight of efforts to detect and deter trafficking in Connecticut.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of Senate Bill 153 and Senate Bill 154.