



Office of The Attorney General
State of Connecticut

**TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
APRIL 4, 2007**

I appreciate the opportunity to support Senate Bill 398, An Act Establishing a Trafficking in Persons Council.

This proposal establishes a 28 member council to address human trafficking issues. The council would facilitate the provision of services to victims of trafficking and assist law enforcement in developing initiatives to strengthen state and local efforts to prevent trafficking.

Trafficking in women and children -- enabling forced labor or prostitution -- is a sinister and serious crime. Each year, approximately 15,000 people are trafficked into the United States. The United States Department of Justice has opened more than 500 trafficking investigations in the past 5 years.

Since 2004, I have worked with Senator Stillman, human rights advocates, state agencies, victim advocates and other members of the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons. The Task Force successfully advocated for legislation to create a specific state crime of trafficking in persons. It has continued to meet and has recommended legislation embodied in Senate Bill 398 to create a formal council to coordinate law enforcement efforts against trafficking and aiding victims of this crime.

As the Task Force found, there are many barriers that prevent victims from reporting a trafficking crime -- including language barriers, distrust of law enforcement, lack of awareness as to sources of assistance, and fear. In addition, once a victim is found, the state lacks a network of resources easily accessed by law enforcement.

The council established through Senate Bill 398 will ensure that the great work of the interagency task force will continue by establishing a formal council to bring together state agencies, local law enforcement and community groups to address the serious crime of trafficking.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of Senate Bill 398.