

**RESOLUTION TO
URGE THE STATE OF WISCONSIN TO STRENGTHEN
ENFORCEMENT AND COORDINATION TO COMBAT HUMAN SEX
TRAFFICKING**

SPONSOR: ALD. BLANKE

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown recognizes human trafficking, including human sex trafficking, as a serious criminal and public safety concern affecting communities throughout Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, human sex trafficking is a criminal activity that does not stop at municipal boundaries and may involve activity occurring across multiple municipalities, counties, and jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, effectively combating human sex trafficking requires coordination among local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, victim service providers, and other appropriate governmental and community organizations; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has established a statewide framework to address human trafficking, including the Human Trafficking Council established pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 165.29 and the Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force; and
<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/165/29>

WHEREAS, pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 165.29, the Human Trafficking Council is responsible for, among other duties, collecting and assessing information concerning human trafficking, assessing sex trafficking activities throughout Wisconsin, developing recommendations for counties and law enforcement agencies, developing a statewide strategic plan for preventing human trafficking, providing resources for law enforcement initiatives, and developing or providing access to training programs; and

WHEREAS, Wis. Stat. § 165.29(1)(j) requires the Human Trafficking Council to submit an annual report to the Wisconsin Legislature summarizing data collected, activities of the Council, and obstacles that prevented the Council from successfully carrying out its statutory duties; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Justice's 2025 Human Trafficking Council Report, submitted pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 165.29(1)(j), provides information regarding the Council's activities and identifies obstacles affecting the Council's ability to carry out its statutory responsibilities; and
<https://www.wisdoj.gov/Documents/2025-htc-report-june-2026.pdf>

WHEREAS, Wis. Stat. § 165.29 is currently scheduled to be repealed effective June 30, 2029, pursuant to 2023 Wisconsin Act 239, and the statute requires the Council's third annual report to include recommendations regarding whether the Council should continue after June 30, 2029, and recommendations concerning the continuation of its ongoing initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown recognizes the important role of local law enforcement in identifying and responding to suspected human trafficking but also recognizes that local law

enforcement agencies require appropriate statewide resources, training, investigative assistance, intelligence, and coordination to effectively address trafficking activity; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Division of Criminal Investigation has statewide jurisdiction to investigate crimes of statewide nature, importance, or influence, including human trafficking, and works with local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies; and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown has considered whether additional municipal licensing and regulatory requirements for massage establishments would provide an effective means of addressing human sex trafficking; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that municipal licensing requirements are regulatory tools and are not a substitute for the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking as a criminal offense; and

WHEREAS, requiring individual municipalities to establish separate licensing and regulatory requirements to address human trafficking may result in inconsistent requirements among jurisdictions and may displace unlawful activity from one community to another without addressing the underlying criminal activity; and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown believes that human sex trafficking is more appropriately and effectively addressed through coordinated statewide enforcement, investigation, information sharing, training, victim services, and prosecution; and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown believes that strengthening the State's existing response to human trafficking would provide municipalities and local law enforcement agencies with greater support and would reduce the need for individual municipalities to develop separate regulatory programs as a means of addressing a statewide criminal activity; and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown supports efforts to identify and protect victims and survivors of human trafficking and to ensure that individuals responsible for trafficking and exploitation are appropriately investigated and prosecuted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of Watertown, Wisconsin, that the City of Watertown urges the Wisconsin Legislature and the State of Wisconsin to strengthen and adequately resource statewide efforts to prevent, identify, investigate, and prosecute human sex trafficking.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Watertown urges the Wisconsin Legislature to review the obstacles identified in the Human Trafficking Council's annual reports that limit the Council's ability to carry out its statutory responsibilities and to consider providing the funding, staffing, and other resources necessary to support effective statewide human trafficking initiatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in advance of the scheduled June 30, 2029, repeal of Wis. Stat. § 165.29, the City of Watertown urges the Wisconsin Legislature to evaluate the effectiveness of the Human Trafficking Council and determine the appropriate long-term statewide structure for coordinating efforts to combat human trafficking and for continuing the Council's successful initiatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Watertown urges the State of Wisconsin to provide additional investigative resources, training, technical assistance, and other appropriate support to local law enforcement agencies investigating suspected human trafficking.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Watertown encourages the State of Wisconsin to strengthen information sharing and coordination among municipal, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies so that trafficking activity occurring across jurisdictional boundaries can be more effectively identified, investigated, and prosecuted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Watertown urges the State of Wisconsin to continue evaluating the effectiveness of existing laws, enforcement practices, and resources relating to human sex trafficking and to recommend legislative or administrative changes where additional authority or resources are necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Watertown supports a consistent statewide approach to combating human sex trafficking and believes that individual municipalities should not be required to create separate and potentially inconsistent licensing requirements as the primary means of addressing human trafficking.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Watertown encourages the State of Wisconsin to prioritize statewide enforcement, investigation, training, victim services, and coordinated prosecution as the primary means of combating human sex trafficking rather than relying upon individual municipalities to develop local regulatory requirements to address this statewide criminal activity.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the City Clerk is directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to the Governor of Wisconsin, the members of the Wisconsin Legislature representing the City of Watertown, the Wisconsin Department of Justice, and the Human Trafficking Council.

<https://www.wisdoj.gov/Pages/PublicSafety/human-trafficking.aspx>

	YES	NO
DAVIS		
LAMPE		
BERG		
NITECKI		
BLANKE		
SMITH		
ARNETT		
HAASE		
MOLDENHAUER		
MAYOR STOCKS		
TOTAL		

ADOPTED September 1, 2026

CITY CLERK

APPROVED September 1, 2026

MAYOR