



# Amy Loudenbeck

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S 31<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Testimony of Rep. Amy Loudenbeck  
Assembly Bill 16  
Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety  
February 3, 2015**

Thank you to the Committee Chair and Representatives for the opportunity to provide testimony on Assembly Bill 16.

Assembly Bill 16 requires the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) to create and make available posters with the national human trafficking resource center hotline. The bill also requires the DOJ to encourage establishments such as truck stops, sporting arenas, salons, hotels, and hospitals to display the poster.

The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHRTC) Hotline is a 24-hour national hotline operated by the Polaris Project and primarily funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The hotline Call Specialists provide resource referrals, tips to law enforcement, information to the public, and training and technical assistance. Each caller receives a unique case identifier so assistance can be provided in the context of the individual's call history.

Call Specialists undergo extensive training and evaluation prior to answering calls. Each tip is unique and reporting decisions are made on a case-by-case basis to determine the most appropriate next steps that prioritize the safety and consent of individuals involved in the case. If the Call Specialist determines that the caller is referencing a potential case of human trafficking, a Supervisor is immediately alerted to the case to coordinate a response.

My office contacted NHRTC Regional Program Specialist Lara Powers who is responsible for Wisconsin protocols. Ms. Powers informed us that regional protocols are developed for each state so information is customized to the specific needs of every caller. Ms. Powers and other Regional Program Specialists are continually working on making connections with local service providers, law enforcement and stakeholders to maintain updated protocols that reflect priorities and resources of local communities.

Here are some interesting things to note about the hotline:

- Since 2007 there have been 662 contacts from Wisconsin
- 189 contacts to were made in 2014 alone, including 43 human trafficking cases reported
- Texting was launched in 2013 and victims reach out for help by text message at twice the rate as by phone call
- The hotline is accessible in 200 languages



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At the state level, twenty-five states require or encourage a hotline number to be posted or promoted within the state. The majority of these states have opted to post the NHTRC hotline number throughout the state. A small number of states (Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Tennessee) have opted to use a state-based hotline.

The locations where a hotline number is posted vary across the states. There are some common venues where human trafficking occurs across the country and many of the hotline posting laws focus on those venues which include places of transit and places where trafficking victims are present.

Some states mandate certain types of businesses to display the poster. Others require posting as a penalty for a nuisance violation related prostitution. This bill takes a distinctly different approach by making display of the poster voluntary, and asking law enforcement and criminal justice to partner with entities across the state to create an information and awareness network. The network doesn't have to be limited to the establishments mentioned in the bill; ideally it would include community organizations, local units of government, and individuals.

The overarching goals of the bill are to raise public awareness, encourage tips, and – most importantly – reach victims and connect them to resources and safety.

I strongly believe that Wisconsinites want to be engaged in the fight against human trafficking, but they don't know how. This bill provides the means and the infrastructure to allow people across Wisconsin to combat human trafficking with confidence. I know our future partners want to be part of a meaningful effort to provide victims and concerned citizens with the right information, at the right time, in the right place. Let's empower them to do it.

Colleagues, thank you for your time today and for allowing me to share information about this important bill. I am happy to answer questions at this time.

# testimony



**To:** Members of the Assembly Committee on  
Criminal Justice and Public Safety

**Date:** February 3, 2015

**From:** Morgan Young, Staff Attorney

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Chairman Kleefisch, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony today. End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin is the statewide membership organization that is the voice for survivors of domestic violence and local domestic violence victim service providers. End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin supports Assembly Bill 16 and thanks all the sponsors and authors for enhancing the awareness around the topic of human trafficking and providing a critical resource to the vulnerable trafficking victims in Wisconsin.

The creation of a hotline poster will allow businesses that trafficking victims frequent to reach these individuals in a manner that maintains the safety of the victim while connecting them to the experts and resources they desperately need. Calls from Wisconsin to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline totaled 189 last year, including 73 tips that were classified as "high" indicators of trafficking activity based on the information provided on the call. Calls to the hotline have increased each year since the creation of the resource in 2007. This data further supports what we hear from our member programs who are increasingly encountering trafficking victims in need of services.

AB 16 will continue to move Wisconsin forward in the fight to end human trafficking. The hotline represents a lifeline for trafficking victims seeking to break free from the bonds of their trafficker. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today. Please support AB 16.