



STATE SENATOR LaTonya Johnson

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE

6TH DISTRICT

**Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities
Testimony on 2017 Assembly Bill 540
October 24, 2017**

Chairman Murphy and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify on 2017 Assembly Bill 540 today.

Wisconsin has earned an unfortunate and appalling distinction as a national human trafficking hub. We are a state where pimps and traffickers come and steal our children off of our streets, forcing them into sexual slavery in circuits like Chicago, Las Vegas, and other parts of the country.

Given that truck drivers are literally where the rubber meets the road where human trafficking occurs along our highways, they can and do play a critical role in identifying and preventing traffickers who create victims through the exploitation of our transportation system.

Truck stops and rest areas are two of the most common places where human trafficking can occur. According to the I-94 Human Trafficking Awareness Project, Interstate 94 is a known circuit by traffickers to transport victims from Chicago to Milwaukee, Madison, Eau Claire, Minneapolis, and the North Dakota oil fields. As a result, truck stops, rest stops, restaurants, gas stations, and hotels along the highway have become common places that victims frequent. Research indicates that education is the number one way to stop trafficking.

As of 2016, Wisconsin has 309,687 licensed commercial drivers. This a vast network of eyes and ears within the interstate trade industry that can support law enforcement in the investigation, arrest, and prosecution of traffickers.

Recognizing the importance that truck drivers can play in identifying and preventing human trafficking, Rep. Kleefisch and I have drafted this legislation which will establish industry-specific materials on the recognition and prevention of human trafficking for use in the instruction in driver education courses that provide instruction in the operation of commercial motor vehicles. This training will affect new drivers only.

Under this legislation, the Wisconsin Department of Justice, in consultation with the Wisconsin Technical College System Board and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, shall identify and establish industry-specific materials for use in the instruction in the recognition and prevention of human trafficking by June 30, 2019.

We drafted this legislation in consultation with the Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association and Truckers Against Trafficking, a nationwide organization that educates and mobilizes members of the trucking and travel plaza industry to combat domestic sex trafficking. They have developed an industry training program used by commercial motor vehicle instructors across the nation that can be viewed on their website, which our offices have emailed to committee members.

Thus far, this legislation has earned the support of Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, City of Milwaukee, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, Schneider National Inc., Truckers Against Trafficking, United Migrant Opportunity Services Inc., Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, and Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association.

Once again, thank you for allowing me to testify today and for your consideration of this bipartisan, common-sense legislation. I would also like to thank Rep. Kleefisch for his work on this bill as the lead Assembly author.



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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

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**Testimony on Assembly Bill 540
Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities
Tuesday, October 24, 2017**

Good morning Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Julie Braun. I am the Policy Initiatives Advisor in the Office of Crime Victim Services at the Department of Justice. I am here today to speak in support of Assembly Bill 540.

As you know, the Department of Justice has been very involved in the fight against human trafficking through enforcement efforts, co-chairing the State Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force and through work with victim service providers. We have also recently launched a project to conduct targeted industry outreach to engage sectors of the workforce positioned to SEE, RECOGNIZE and REPORT signs of human trafficking.

Law enforcement can't be everywhere. One of the biggest opportunities we have in this fight is to remove the strategic advantage enjoyed by traffickers when members of the public do not recognize the crime of human trafficking for what it really is. Our current industry outreach project involves the hotel and lodging industry. It is a partnership with the Department of Children and Families and the Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association. In January, we will launch a webinar in three languages and other industry-specific tools to train hotel and lodging staff to recognize and report signs of human trafficking.

AB 540 proposes a simple and cost-effective way to reach members of another key workforce—commercial drivers—so they can be alert to the indicators of human trafficking in order to report and prevent it. In 2016, there were over two hundred thousand valid CDL holders in Wisconsin.¹ Imagine the power of that number when over time, as proposed in AB

¹ Source: The 2016, there were 204,226 valid CDL holders according to Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Drivers Services, Report YRCDLDAT accessed 10/19/17: <http://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/about-wisdot/newsroom/statistics/factsfig/cdl-stats.pdf>

540, every new licensee receives instruction in the recognition and prevention of human trafficking.

In fact, we really don't have to imagine, because this concept has already been *demonstrated to be effective* by Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT)², a national group that has trained hundreds of thousands within the trucking industry nationwide to recognize and report human trafficking. They have shared success story after success story, centered on the same theme: Someone who was trained about what to look for in the course of their everyday job, made a call because something didn't seem quite right. What has happened within the trucking industry, as a result of TAT's training, is remarkable: Members of the industry have gone from being known as a group targeted by traffickers *as a potential customer base*, to being a very important source of tips and reports about suspected trafficking to the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

Whether it is while fueling up, stopping at a rest stop, driving through a major transportation hub or on a rural route, CDL holders are in the position to see and report signs of human trafficking. We just need to get the information to them.

DOJ partnered with TAT in 2014 to conduct outreach to the trucking industry in SE Wisconsin. We have another project in the works with them in the coming year related to the busing industry. We have **great** confidence that the workforce in this sector can turn the tables on traffickers. Many traffickers move their victims around and seek to isolate them, counting on the ignorance of the public. They exploit legitimate businesses to promote their criminal activities. They prosper when the public doesn't know the signs of trafficking and when the public believes that victims aren't *really* victims. We can change this.

DOJ supports AB 540 because it engages members of a sector who have a **very real chance** of seeing indicators of human trafficking and when that happens, we want them to recognize it as such and report it so that victims can get assistance faster and traffickers can be apprehended more often.

We urge your support of the bill and I thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

² Truckers Against Trafficking is a 501c3 non-profit whose mission is to educate, equip, empower and mobilize members of the trucking industry to recognize the signs of human trafficking and know how to combat it through the normal course of their jobs. Information about the training and resources available from TAT can be found at: www.TruckersAgainstTrafficking.org



Testimony

To: Members of the State Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities
From: Fierce Freedom
Date: October 24, 2017
Re: Assembly Bill 540
Position: Support

Good morning Chairman Murphy and members of the committee. My name is Jodi Emerson and I am the Director of Public Policy and Community Relations for Fierce Freedom. Fierce Freedom is a non-profit, based in Eau Claire that raises awareness and educates the public about domestic human trafficking.

Fierce Freedom fully supports this bill because our entire mission is about educating people what human trafficking looks like and empowering the average citizen to not stand idly by as the fastest growing crime on the planet is happening in our own hometowns. We provide training every week to various community groups, businesses or organizations about how human trafficking intersects with them and what they can do about it.

According to US Department of Justice, Office of Victims of a Crime "Due to the complex nature of the crime, perpetrators often operate unnoticed, and those who suffer are not likely to self-identify as victims of human trafficking. Trafficking victims do not always see themselves as victims, often blaming themselves for their situation. This makes discovering this crime more difficult because victims rarely self-report, and the time and resources required to uncover violations can be significant. Too many victims are misidentified and treated as criminals or undocumented migrants. In some cases, victims are hidden behind doors in domestic servitude in a home. In other cases, victims live in plain view and interact with people on a daily basis, yet they experience commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor under extreme circumstances in public settings such as exotic dance clubs, factories, or restaurants, and are not identified due to a lack of identification training and awareness."

2015 Wisconsin Act 5 directed the Wisconsin Department of Justice to create a poster that advertised the number of the National Human Trafficking Hotline. This was a wonderful first step and I am thankful every time I see one of these posters in a rest stop or truck stop. However, if you not educated about human trafficking simply having this number doesn't help. Oftentimes human trafficking is confused with human smuggling or kidnapping. A simple google search for "human trafficking" turns up images of young people chained, tied up or in a cage. While this happens sometimes, often the bonds that hold a trafficking victim to their trafficker are invisible. The mental bondage that a victim endures is much stronger than any physical bonds could ever be.

That is why victim outcry is so low with the crime of human trafficking, some experts putting victim outcry at as little as 1% of all trafficking cases. The coercion factor in human trafficking means that victims feel they are responsible for the crime and deserve what is

happening to them. Sometimes, they don't understand that what is happening to them isn't a healthy relationship.

A little over a year ago, I was giving a prevention training to a group of 9th graders at an Eau Claire High School. During this presentation, we talked about the grooming techniques that traffickers use to get their victims and how oftentimes the trafficker will pose as a boyfriend and the victim will do whatever to keep their boyfriend happy. After the training, a girl came up to me and said, "you mean it's not ok for my boyfriend to make me do XYZ sexual act to his friend so he can use his friend's car for the weekend". This girl had no idea that the relationship she was in wasn't healthy, she had no idea that her boyfriend was pimping her out. She never would have asked for help had it not been for that presentation I did.

This is what we are up against. We aren't talking about men and women, boys and girls who are caged or tied up and just waiting for the right time to run away. We are talking about people who have been separated from their support networks and rely on their traffickers for food, shelter and what little safety they have in their lives. They are not asking for help. We need to do it for them. If you see something, say something isn't just a phrase for the Department of Homeland Security. It is a message we need to keep in mind for crimes that are happening every day.

Arming commercial drivers to understand what human trafficking looks like and how they can fight this crime will be a big step forward in our goal to eradicate modern day slavery. Think about the places commercial drivers are and what they see.

When I first heard about this bill, I thought of over-the-road drivers who are stopping at rest stops and truck stops. We often hear of car loads of girls being driven to these places to service the drivers. The derogatory term "lot lizard" is so prevalent in the trucking industry that people can even purchase magnets to add to their truck to let people know if they would like the services of these people or if they should simply move on to the next truck in the lot.

But think of other places that commercial drivers are and what they see. Bus drivers, delivery drivers, milk truck haulers will now all be able to be the eyes and ears of law enforcement. The amount of suspected labor trafficking that is happening in the agricultural industry in Wisconsin amazes me. Think about how often truck drivers go to a farm for pick up or delivery and what they may see at those farms. Situations that are often unreported will now be able to be investigated with a tip from an informed, educated driver.

When I was a young child, we often went on long trips across the country and every time before we left, my father would make sure our CB was in the car and ready to use. He always said that if we were in trouble the "Knights of the Highway" were just a radio call away. If we ever needed help, truckers were there to help. I'd like to think that this bill is a nod to those days when truckers were able and willing to help the average citizen in their time of need.

Ladies and gentlemen, I encourage you to pass this bill. Help us get training to the truckers on the road so they can help stop the fastest growing crime on the planet, human trafficking.

Tuesday, October 24, 2017

To the Committee on Colleges and Universities:

My name is Angela Pfothhauer. I live in the Town of Verona.

I am writing in support of AB 540. Including human trafficking awareness and prevention education in new commercial driver training courses is a powerful strategy for combating sex trafficking in the state of Wisconsin. After hearing about the success of this legislation in Texas, I want this legislation in my state, too, to confront this abhorring act of trafficking, and sexual exploitation.

A friend of mine, who is a long time employee of the transportation industry, commented that "Drivers see and hear so much, and they're out there 24/7." Passing AB 540 will allow us to reach a critical network of individuals with the training necessary to identify and report incidents of human trafficking. This is a benefit to our law enforcement, our communities, and most importantly, the victims.

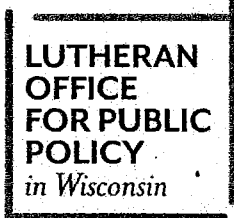
The positive impact of passing AB 540 goes beyond helping residents of Wisconsin. Victims of human trafficking can often be transported across state lines, and Wisconsin drivers cross state lines as well. By educating commercial drivers in Wisconsin on this topic, we cannot imagine our reach.

That is why I ask you to pass this commendable bill.

Sincerely,

Angela Pfothhauer

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

October 13²⁴, 2017

To: The Honorable Representative David Murphy and Members of the Committee on College and Universities.

Regarding: AB 540

Dear Chairman Murphy and Committee Members,

I am representing the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin, a statewide advocacy ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We advocate for just policies, especially related to hunger and poverty and care for God's creation, based on our social statements and Christian scripture.

The Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin speaks in favor of AB 540. We have been leading educational forums on anti-sex trafficking around the state and upper peninsula or Michigan. We meet a lot of people doing similar work and so hear many stories. One of the striking stories I heard was several months ago in the Fox Valley. A member of Reach Counselling was giving a presentation on trafficking at a high school. After the forum, a boy walked up to her and said that the signs of trafficking she talked about described his friend, who suddenly was wearing more expensive clothing, was disappearing a lot, had an older boyfriend, etc. As a result, the girl's situation was investigated, she was indeed being trafficked and was rescued. Just think if that educational opportunity had not been offered.

Educational materials on human trafficking should be made part of a lot of curricula tailored to the audience. Truckers won't notice those the same sorts of signs. They might actually see signs that are actually more obvious but still not notice without training. It is easy to assume everyone selling sex is doing it because they want to. How important it is to require training materials for those professionals who are among those most likely to witness human trafficking.

This legislation will help create awareness among truckers in what sounds like a very fair process. It will help children and youth trapped in what we can easily label as modern day slavery, experiencing abuse beyond what most of us can imagine. Awareness growing among people in any group could also have a positive ripple effect in other areas in their lives.

Thank you for considering to support this bill.

Pastor Cindy Crane
Director

But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Luke 18:16