STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Newsletter From Rep. Tracy Steele

District 72

May 30, 2025

Human Trafficking Prevention

Every day, across Arkansas and our nation, human trafficking silently preys on the vulnerable, exploiting innocence and eroding lives. It is a crisis that hides in plain sight—within our communities, along our highways, and behind closed doors. In the 2025 Regular Session, the Arkansas House of Representatives took decisive action to confront this scourge and protect those at risk.

One of the key measures we passed, Act 484, mandates that nail salons, massage businesses, and privately owned facilities offering food, fuel, showers, or sanitary services within 1,320 feet of an interstate must prominently display information about the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

In addition, Act 629 strengthens oversight of massage therapy establishments, requiring them to register all therapists working at their facilities with the Arkansas Department of Health. This move aims to prevent illicit operations that can serve as fronts for trafficking and ensure a higher standard of accountability.

Recognizing the particular danger traffickers pose to vulnerable populations, we also passed Act 366. This law introduces enhanced penalties for individuals convicted of recruiting trafficked persons from specific high-risk locations such as shelters for runaway youth, correctional facilities, foster homes, childcare institutions, and detention facilities for delinquent children.

Further strengthening victims' rights, Act 316 expands the definition of sex offenses to include trafficking persons and grooming minors for future sex trafficking.

Since its inception, the National Human Trafficking Hotline has identified 770 cases of human trafficking in Arkansas, involving 1,929 victims. Just last year, 80 cases were reported, with 153 victims. These are not mere statistics; they represent lives interrupted, families broken, and futures stolen. Our work in the legislature is a commitment to stand with survivors and ensure justice is served.