

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, January is recognized as National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, an observance initiated in 2010 to uphold the equality and freedom of all individuals, promote public awareness, and mobilize action against human trafficking in all its forms; and

WHEREAS, nearly 25 years after the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, human trafficking remains a pervasive issue, affecting 27.6 million people globally, with cases reported in every U.S. state, including Washington; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking is both a crime and a public health issue that harms individuals, families, and communities, affecting the safety, dignity, and well-being of all involved; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle recognizes commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) and labor trafficking as crimes fueled by violence against women and girls, gender discrimination, and other systemic inequities such as poverty, and lack of resources, disproportionately impacting marginalized individuals, including BIPOC communities, immigrants, refugees, LGBTQ individuals, and youth experiencing homelessness or in foster care; and

WHEREAS, Washington State became the first state in the nation to criminalize human trafficking in 2003, setting a precedent for justice reform and survivor-centered efforts following tragic local cases that galvanized advocates and policymakers; and

WHEREAS, in the last two years, Aurora Avenue North has been the second highest geographic area in the country for number of people experiencing human trafficking with an estimation of thousands of people being trafficked in Seattle annually.

WHEREAS, the average age of entry into commercial sexual exploitation is between 12-15 years old, and victims suffer profound physical, emotional, and psychological harm; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking occurs across industries—including agriculture, hospitality, and domestic work, with traffickers exploiting individuals through force, fraud, or coercion and often operating in plain sight; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle recognizes that prevention of human trafficking requires reducing gender-based violence against women and children, confronting societal acceptance of commercial sexual exploitation, and addressing systemic root causes, reducing demand for exploitation, and providing survivor-centered, trauma-informed services that prioritize empowerment, safety, and autonomy; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle has made significant investments in community-based services—including shelter, housing, mobile advocacy, therapeutic support, and harm-reduction services—while recognizing the ongoing need for accessible 24/7 services, safe housing, and coordinated responses; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle’s Mayor’s Office on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault leads efforts to combat commercial sexual exploitation through initiatives like CEASE (Coordinated Effort Against Sexual Exploitation), convening partners to identify service gaps, improve collaboration, and ensure holistic responses to survivor needs; and

WHEREAS, Seattle’s efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex include creation of stay out of prostitution areas solely applicable to buyers and traffickers and initiatives like the Sex Buyers Intervention Program, educating individuals on the devastating societal impact of sex buying while holding offenders accountable; and

WHEREAS, a successful response to human trafficking requires a coordinated, community-wide effort that includes collaboration across sectors and with those who have experienced human trafficking firsthand, to ensure that services and programs are effective and meet the needs of all survivors; and

WHEREAS, under our One Seattle vision to build a thriving, innovative and inclusive city, the City of Seattle upholds our commitment as a place of opportunity, equity, and justice, where all individuals are treated with dignity, receive fair compensation, and are free from exploitation and human rights abuses;

THEREFORE, THE MAYOR AND THE SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL PROCLAIM
JANUARY 2025 TO BE

Human Trafficking Prevention Month in Seattle

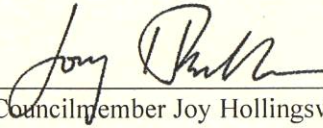
Reaffirming our collective commitment to confronting gender-based violence, strengthening communities, supporting survivors, and preventing trafficking by addressing systemic inequities, expanding critical resources, and building a coordinated city-wide response.



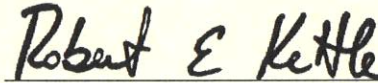
Mayor Bruce Harrell



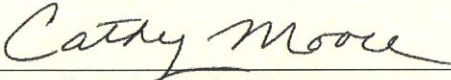
Council President Sara Nelson



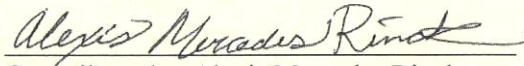
Councilmember Joy Hollingsworth



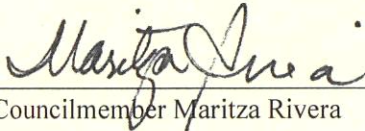
Councilmember Robert Kettle



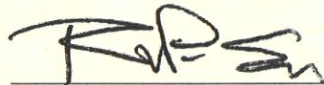
Councilmember Cathy Moore



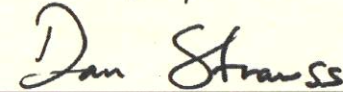
Councilmember Alexis Mercedes Rinck



Councilmember Maritza Rivera



Councilmember Rob Saka



Councilmember Dan Strauss