

WHEREAS; as defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, human trafficking occurs when a person is recruited, obtained, harbored, or transported through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of labor, involuntary servitude, debt bondage, or sexual exploitation, or when any commercial sex act involves a minor; and

WHEREAS; human trafficking can happen to anyone—regardless of race, age, or gender—with vulnerable populations, such as people who may have experienced prior abuse or sexual violence, poverty, unstable living situations or homelessness, or youth involved in the child welfare system, being at a higher risk; and

WHEREAS; trafficking is pervasive in Wisconsin and across the nation, but due to its isolating and secretive nature, communities across the state are often unaware that trafficking exists within their neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS; recognizing potential indicators of human trafficking, including but not limited to withdrawal from friends and family, behavioral changes, signs of mental or physical abuse, and lack of personal autonomy and control, can be crucial to identifying and aiding victims; and

WHEREAS; combating human trafficking is a shared responsibility, and efforts at the state, county, and local levels continue to address trafficking crimes and provide support to survivors so that they can begin to heal, as well as to generate awareness around the important work and accomplishments of those working to end human trafficking in Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS; Wisconsin has a long history of battling worker exploitation and protecting the dignity of labor through strong workplace protections, including enforcing wage and hour laws, safeguarding minors and migrant workers, and leading efforts to address human trafficking and worker misclassification; and

WHEREAS; it is crucial that all Wisconsinites educate themselves on how to recognize the signs of trafficking, report suspicious activities, and support survivors; and

WHEREAS; the long-lasting effects on the physical and emotional well-being of people who have experienced the manipulation and exploitation of human traffickers are immeasurable, and the state recognizes all survivors for their resilience and strength; and

WHEREAS; this month, the state of Wisconsin joins the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, along with other local, state, and national partners, in reaffirming its commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of all kids and families in communities throughout the state;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tony Evers, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, do hereby proclaim January 2026 as

## **HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH**

and January 11, 2026, as

## **NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS DAY**

throughout the State of Wisconsin and I commend this observance to all our state's residents.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in the City of Madison this 29<sup>th</sup> day of December 2025.

TONY EVERS, Governor

By the Governor:

SARAH GODLEWSKI, Secretary of State