

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Board Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA DESIGNATE JANUARY AS NATIONAL SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Human trafficking involves the commercial exchange and exploitation of humans, involuntary labor, servitude and debt bondage. Human trafficking is a growing worldwide problem rising to the second most common criminal activity behind the illegal drug trade. Florida is the third highest state in human trafficking incidents in the United States, with Miami-Dade in the top ten highest trafficking counties in the nation.

On December 31, 2012, the President of the United States proclaimed January 2013 as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. As shared by President Obama, "This month, we rededicate ourselves to stopping one of the greatest human rights abuses of our time. Around the world, millions of men, women, and children are bought, sold, beaten, and abused, locked in compelled service and hidden in darkness. They toil in factories and fields; in brothels and sweatshops; at sea, abroad, and at home. They are the victims of human trafficking -- a crime that amounts to modern-day slavery. As Americans, we have long rejected such cruelty. We have recognized it as a debasement of our common humanity and an affront to the principles we cherish. And for more than a century, we have made it a national mission to bring slavery and human trafficking to an end."

The implementation of Florida's Safe Harbor Act, signed into law by Governor Rick Scott, also helps ensure the safety of child victims who have been trafficked for sex. The Safe Harbor Act allows children who have been rescued from prostitution the ability to receive assistance from child welfare professionals, instead of being placed in juvenile delinquency. This allows the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Juvenile Justice, law enforcement and our local partners across the state to treat and help the victims of this abuse. The victims will receive intensive treatment in residential settings that are properly prepared for their safety and success.

In local efforts, The School Board of Miami-Dade County passed Agenda Item H-20 in May 2012 endorsing a Human Trafficking Awareness Campaign. The District's commitment to bringing an end to human trafficking includes awareness training aimed at identifying at-risk behaviors and providing appropriate interventions in school communities throughout the county.

**Replacement
Good Cause
H-23**

With the collaboration of community stakeholders and experts, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) developed strategies to promote awareness, share both on-line and local resources in the community, and analyze gaps in the areas of prevention and intervention. The information learned was then provided to administrators by way of a School Principal Briefing, which included the dissemination of the Human Trafficking Prevention Poster developed by the Students Services division of M-DCPS, along with comprehensive resource pages and fact sheets. Content is now available to all school personnel via the M-DCPS website.

The District's awareness campaign serves to educate all employees on the issues of human trafficking and its impact on our children and community. As part of the awareness campaign, training has been provided to over one thousand Student Services Professionals including School Counselors, College Assistance Program Advisors, School Social Workers, TRUST Specialists, School Psychologists, SPED/Behavioral Specialists, School Nurses, Health Technicians, and Administrators. In addition, over one thousand students have viewed presentations aimed at educating and increasing awareness on these issues.

The District's Human Trafficking Campaign, Florida's Safe Harbor Act, and the President's proclamation are efforts that shed light on the growing problem of human trafficking and its impact and consequences to our youth. This item seeks to further commend local, state, and national efforts to increase awareness of human trafficking by designating January as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month.

**ACTION PROPOSES BY
LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida designate January as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention month in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.