

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING: RIGHT TO LIFE — LIFESPAN POLICY STATEMENT

*Adopted January 18, 2021*

According to the definition of the United Nations, HUMAN TRAFFICKING means: "The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons for the purpose of exploitation." The UN further explains that traffickers are able to exploit their victims through different types of human slavery such as: sex work, forced labor or organ removal and selling. Sex trafficking, in particular, is a multi-billion-dollar industry, where the world is its market. Human beings who are trafficked get treated as disposable, human beings become comparable to raw material that can be bought and/or sold.

Traffickers are able to trick and/or lure their victims into slavery by taking advantage of poverty in their country, the individual's lack of prospects and /or their hope for a better future. The victims are then brought to another country, either legally or illegally, led by false promises of work or prospective marriages. Once they arrive, the victims are coerced into a position of dependency by their trafficker's through debt, bondage, violence, and/or drugs. Therefore, the victims become exploited goods and are deprived of their personal rights, freedom of speech, independence and self-respect.

Michigan is ranked 7th in the nation in human trafficking. The number of major highways running through the state, as well as its proximity to Canada make it easier to transport victims from one place to another. Major national sporting events are also opportunities for trafficking.

Human trafficking is often thought of as being a crime against adults but children, some still infants, are frequently victims of this horrible abuse. Women and girls who become pregnant from the assaults on their persons may become victims of abortion as well. Their traffickers take them to the abortion clinic, often lie about their age, and how they became pregnant and pay for their abortions.

This incredible assault on the human person and the denial of dignity, respect and protection for its victims is not to be tolerated.

Nearly every county in Michigan has a task force dedicated to the prevention of human trafficking. Right to Life-LIFESPAN encourages everyone to learn to recognize the signs of human trafficking and to work closely with law enforcement agencies to rescue the victims of this horrible crime and to encourage swift prosecution of those responsible.

