
SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8009

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

By Senators Kohl-Welles, Swecker, Holmquist, King, Keiser, Stevens, Franklin, Kline, Hargrove, Fraser, Prentice, and Tom

Read first time 02/05/09. Referred to Committee on Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection.

1 TO THE HONORABLE BARACK OBAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND
2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO JANET NAPOLITANO,
5 SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY:

6 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
7 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully
8 represent and petition as follows:

9 WHEREAS, Human trafficking, a form of slavery, persists in our
10 modern world. This deep-rooted phenomenon involves the criminal
11 transportation of people as commodities within or across borders to
12 perform forced labor; and

13 WHEREAS, Each year, an estimated six hundred thousand to eight
14 hundred thousand men, women, and children are trafficked against their
15 will across international borders. Fourteen thousand five hundred to
16 seventeen thousand five hundred of these people are trafficked into the
17 United States; and

18 WHEREAS, A significant impediment trafficking victims encounter in
19 seeking access to the criminal justice system is their fear of
20 deportation and the consequent permanent separation from family members

1 who reside in the United States. This fear prevents many immigrant
2 crime victims from seeking police protection, shelter, medical care,
3 and other social services; and

4 WHEREAS, Recognizing the need to take strong action to combat
5 trafficking at home and abroad, the United States Congress created the
6 T visa which provides trafficking victims legal means to prevent
7 deportation. However, while the law provides for the issuance of up to
8 five thousand T visas a year, less than one thousand one hundred have
9 been issued in the seven years this program has been available;

10 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the
11 Department of Homeland Security examine how to expedite the processing
12 of T visa applications. Additionally, your Memorialists respectfully
13 pray that Congress study the federal T visa program to determine why
14 the rate of issuing T visas is so low and what can be done to make it
15 easier for eligible human trafficking victims to qualify.

16 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
17 transmitted to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United
18 States, Janet Napolitano, Secretary of the Department of Homeland
19 Security, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the
20 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of
21 Washington.

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