

---

**SENATE BILL 5355**

---

**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senators C. Wilson, Kuderer, Lovelett, Nguyen, Randall, Valdez, and Wellman

Read first time 01/13/23. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to mandating instruction on sex trafficking  
2 prevention and identification for students in grades seven through  
3 12; adding a new section to chapter 28A.320 RCW; and creating a new  
4 section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that:

7 (1) The United States has the second largest concentration of  
8 past and current trafficking victims, and Washington state is  
9 currently the sixth largest epicenter of sex trafficking in the  
10 United States.

11 (2) More than 45 percent of all sex trafficking victims are  
12 minors and attending our nation's schools every day.

13 (3) Currently, most trafficking avoids detection, with one study  
14 from the national institute of justice finding that "fewer than half  
15 of all suspected traffickers in the United States had been arrested."  
16 Recent national institute of justice supported research reveals that  
17 labor and sex trafficking data appearing in the federal bureau of  
18 investigation's national uniform crime reporting program may  
19 significantly understate the extent of trafficking crimes in the  
20 United States.

1 (4) The undefined nature of human trafficking contributes to  
2 widespread ignorance for public agencies in a position to address the  
3 crime. Sixty percent of state and local prosecutors nationwide "do  
4 not consider trafficking a problem in their jurisdictions," and over  
5 70 percent of local, state, and county law enforcement agencies  
6 wrongly "view human trafficking as rare or nonexistent" in their  
7 local communities.

8 (5) Nearly half of prosecutors and law enforcement agencies  
9 across the country are unaware of specific existing antitrafficking  
10 laws or definitions that constitute acts of human trafficking, which  
11 manifests in current ineffective mitigation strategies.

12 (6) Child sex trafficking survivors are disproportionately girls  
13 of color. In King county, 52 percent of all child sex trafficking  
14 victims are black and 84 percent of youth victims are female, while  
15 black girls comprise 1.1 percent of the population.

16 (7) Sex traffickers are not overgeneralized to any demographic  
17 but are disproportionately white men. In King county, 80 percent of  
18 sex traffickers are white men.

19 (8) Females of color bear the brunt of prostitution imprisonment  
20 as a result of sexual violence in sex trafficking due to mandatory  
21 arrests. For example, Latinx women account for nearly 61 percent of  
22 juvenile prostitution arrests. By contrast, sex traffickers face  
23 little to no consequences for their role in exploitation.

24 (9) Twenty-five service agencies participated in a 2007 survey.  
25 Nineteen of these agencies provided information that aligned with  
26 what are understood to be "red-flag" indicators of trafficking  
27 situations. Victimization and human trafficking are considerable  
28 concerns for eastern Washington, particularly Spokane, and there is a  
29 wide spectrum of trafficking activities that include sex slavery,  
30 forced prostitution, forced panhandling, farm labor, janitorial work,  
31 and domestic servitude.

32 (10) On any given day, between 300 and 500 people, some as young  
33 as 11 years old, are trafficked in the Puget Sound area for labor or  
34 sex.

35 (11) Intersectional, accurate, and actionable sex trafficking  
36 education is necessary to enable all students to break down  
37 stereotypes of affected parties in sex trafficking and provide them  
38 with tools for identifying and combatting this crime.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    A new section is added to chapter 28A.320  
2    RCW to read as follows:

3        (1) Beginning no later than the 2024-25 school year, school  
4    districts must provide instruction on sex trafficking prevention and  
5    identification at least once between grades seven and 12.

6        (2) The instruction may be a stand-alone course or integrated  
7    into other relevant courses, or an existing course may be repurposed  
8    to include this instruction depending on the school or school  
9    district funding and circumstances.

10       (3) The instruction required under this section must include the  
11    following:

12       (a) Information related to race, gender, and socioeconomic status  
13    in sex trafficking as it relates to both victims and perpetrators,  
14    including issues of intersectionality and legislative implications of  
15    these categories;

16       (b) Medically and legally accurate definitions of sex trafficking  
17    and information related to how terms become stigmatized, which in  
18    turn leads to a lack of reporting and difficulties with detecting and  
19    prosecuting the crime; and

20       (c) Information related to reporting systems and community  
21    engagement opportunities with local, state, or national organizations  
22    against sex trafficking and basic identification training to  
23    determine if an individual is at risk of or has been sex trafficked.

--- END ---