



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor

Executive Order

NUMBER SEVEN (2022)

ESTABLISHING THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION AND SURVIVOR SUPPORT

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor, I hereby issue this Executive Order establishing a commission to prevent human trafficking and provide support to its victims.

Importance of the Initiative

Human trafficking is a global epidemic. Through force, fraud, or coercion, criminals exploit men, women, and children into sex trafficking and forced labor. Around the world, at any given moment, an estimated 24.9 million people are victims of this criminal exploitation. Our Commonwealth has not been spared from the reach of these abhorrent crimes. According to Polaris, a nonprofit resource and advocacy center combating human trafficking, there were 179 cases of trafficking and seventy-seven traffickers identified in Virginia in 2019 alone.

Virginia is committed to ending the scourge of human trafficking. Each day, our law enforcement officers and court systems work to apprehend, prosecute, and bring to justice those responsible for the exploitation of their fellow human beings. The conviction of human traffickers, restitution for their victims, and assistance for the survivors remains a top public safety priority for the Commonwealth. We must remain proactive in our efforts and ensure the dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to combat human trafficking are equipped with the tools necessary to win this fight.

Establishment of the Commission

Accordingly, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor, under Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and §§ 2.2-134 and 2.2-135 of the *Code of Virginia*, and subject to my continuing and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby establish the Human Trafficking Prevention and Survivor Support Commission (Commission).

Composition and Support of the Commission

The Governor will appoint the members and chair(s) of the Commission; the Sex Trafficking Response Coordinator will also participate in the Commission.

The Governor will select survivors of human trafficking, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, experts, and scholars with knowledge of and/or experience with human trafficking, and victims of human trafficking. In carrying out its duties, the Commission may appoint working groups as it deems appropriate, and may solicit participation from relevant subject matter experts, law enforcement, practitioners, and analysts.

Staff support for the Commission will be provided by the Office of the Governor and any other agencies or offices as may be designated by the Governor. An estimated 250 hours of staff time will be required to support the work of the Commission. No direct costs are expected for the work of the Commission.

Duties of the Commission

The Commission will be responsible for coordinating with the Secretary of Public Safety, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Labor, the Office of Attorney General, as well as the State Coordinator and any other federal, state, local, or private sector entity to accomplish the following goals:

1. Increase enforcement by:
 - a. Coordinating with state and local law enforcement, Commonwealth's Attorneys, and U.S. Attorneys to increase prosecution and seek jail time as opposed to just fines for those who solicit prostitution;
 - b. Increasing targeting of illicit massage businesses by coordinating with local law enforcement, private property owners, regulatory boards, and increasing investigation into tax compliance;
 - c. Collaborating with authorities to ensure social media and technology companies actively fight trafficking on their platforms;
 - d. Ensuring all law enforcement officers are thoroughly trained in identifying trafficking cases and protocols for working with victims;
2. Empower survivors by:
 - a. Partnering with nonprofits and the private sector to increase the provision of resources survivors need for mental and behavioral recovery and wellness;
 - b. Fostering public private partnerships to educate, train, and empower survivors towards a career path;

- c. Fostering public private partnerships to assist victims in securing temporary and long-term housing options.
- 3. Enhance education by:
 - a. Increasing awareness of the signs of potential trafficking and appropriate ways to intervene, including for teachers and school officials;
 - b. Requiring schools to provide online safety training and education;
 - c. Expanding awareness of the National Trafficking Hotline and other resources for victims to report and receive assistance to escape trafficking.

The Commission and its subgroups will meet upon the call of the Chair(s) and will issue an interim report with its findings and recommendations no later than September 1, 2022, and any additional reports and recommendations as necessary or as requested by the Governor. This report may also include a proposed framework for the continuation of the Commission's work. The Commission's findings and recommendations will be distributed to promote best practices across the Commonwealth.

Effective Date of the Executive Order

This Executive Order shall be effective upon signing and shall remain in full force and effect for one year from its signing, unless amended or rescinded by further executive order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this 15th day of January, 2022.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn Youngkin".

Glenn Youngkin, Governor

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly Thomasson".

Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth