



## MAYOR PROCLAIMS JANUARY HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH



*Mayor Gary Fuller, Pam Brinson, Kathryn Guthrie,  
Dr. Veronica Chesnut*

WHEREAS, human trafficking is a very real problem facing the world today, and – although it can take many forms, including debt bondage, forced marriage, slavery and commercial sexual exploitation – in every case it goes against the core principles of individual freedom and civil rights that our state and nation stand for; and

WHEREAS, the City of Opelika, Alabama is committed to ensuring that our community remains on the front lines in combating this deplorable crime; and

WHEREAS, due to the secretive and illegal nature, it is difficult to accurately quantify the extent of human trafficking. However, the U.S. State Department estimates that anywhere from 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year. Most victims of human trafficking are women or children who have been marginalized and isolated from society. The difficulty in grasping the full scope of this problem can be further compounded

because people often turn a blind eye to it; and

WHEREAS, the first step in eliminating human trafficking is to educate others. We must work to ensure that all our residents are aware of this problem and how to spot it. We must work together as a community so that human traffickers are punished and to protect and assist their victims. Through the vigilance and perseverance of our citizens, effective enforcement of justice will someday be a reality; and

WHEREAS, we ask all residents of this community to join us in raising the visibility of this crime whose victims are all too often invisible. Together, we can become more informed about this pressing issue and work to combat its injustices.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Gary Fuller, Mayor of the City of Opelika, Alabama do hereby proclaim January 2020 as

### ***Human Trafficking Awareness Month***

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of Opelika, Alabama, to be affixed this the 7th day of January 2020.