



From the Governing Body of  
Opelika, Alabama



## Proclamation



**WHEREAS**, Alabama's Human Trafficking Awareness Month was established in January 2011 in observance of National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, to proclaim the equality and freedom of all people, to advocate for legislation, to educate leaders and to encourage public awareness to the various forms of human trafficking; and

**WHEREAS**, human trafficking occurs when an adult or child is recruited, harbored, obtained, or exported through force, fraud or coercion for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labor, involuntary servitude, debt bondage and other methods of slavery; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States government estimates that 600,000 to 800,000 individuals are trafficked across international borders each year and exploited through forced labor and forced sexual activity; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Institute Against Human Trafficking states that the United States is the number one consumer of commercial sex worldwide; and, **WHEREAS**, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimates that 100,000 – 300,000 children are at risk for being trafficked in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2017, the University of Alabama identified 1,167 human trafficking victims within the state of Alabama with 57% of those being minors; and **WHEREAS**, Polaris estimates that the national age of entry into the sex trade is 17 years old, here in Alabama, Homeland Security has identified victims as young as 9 years old; and,

**WHEREAS**, the first step in eliminating human trafficking is to educate the community. We must work to ensure that all residents are aware of this problem, how to spot it, and how to report it. We must work together as a community to bring victims to safety and to punish human traffickers; 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 and work to combat its injustices.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, Gary Fuller**, Mayor of the City of Opelika, Alabama do hereby proclaim January 2021 as ***“Human Trafficking Awareness Month”*** in ***Opelika, Alabama***.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of Opelika, Alabama, to be affixed this the ***5<sup>th</sup> day of January 2021***.

  
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Gary Fuller  
Mayor, City of Opelika