

# Texas enacts law to aid human-trafficking victims: Republican governor signs landmark law

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Texas has become the first state in the nation to provide assistance to domestic human-trafficking victims with a landmark law that Governor Rick Perry signed into law in August.

The law establishes a statewide Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force in the attorney general's office, creates a human-trafficking training component for law-enforcement officers, starts a program to connect services to trafficking victims and begins a grant program for groups that provide assistance to domestic trafficking victims.

Among faith groups that helped shepherd the bipartisan bill through the Lone Star State's legislature was the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission. Human-trafficking victims account for 74 percent of the sex-trade market, according to statistics provided by the commission.

"Most people think human trafficking happens elsewhere in places like Thailand and Cambodia, but the reality is that it is happening in our own backyard," said Republican state representative Randy Weber of Pearland, who authored the legislation, which was also sponsored by Democratic senator Leticia Van de Putte of San Antonio.

"In fact, the vast majority of the victims identified within Texas are actually our own citizens," said Weber.

Republican governor Perry, in signing the bill August 24, said, "The task force created by this bill will focus state efforts on ending this criminal activity that primarily targets women and children." -ABP