

STATE OF ARKANSAS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

PROCLAMATION

EO 23-17

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME - GREETINGS:

EXECUTIVE ORDER TO PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND TO PROTECT THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF ARKANSAS.

WHEREAS: Children and youth are the future of Arkansas, therefore, it is a critical role of the State to protect them from the horrors of human trafficking through prevention, education, intervention, community partnerships, and prosecution;

WHEREAS: Human trafficking takes many forms, including exploitation of adults and children for labor and sex, and it is often connected to other reprehensible crimes, including sexual assault and drug trafficking;

WHEREAS: Although the Arkansas State Police Child Abuse Hotline has accepted 243 reports of human trafficking involving minors since August 2017, Arkansas lacks a consistent, uniform screening and identification process of human trafficking, which has resulted in underreporting of this horrendous criminal action; and

WHEREAS: It is the policy of this administration to pursue a coordinated and integrated approach to safeguard children and prevent human trafficking in Arkansas by supporting victims and prosecuting human traffickers to the fullest extent of the law.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS, acting under the authority vested in me as the Governor of the State of Arkansas, do hereby order the following:

- (1) The Secretary of the Department of Human Services shall coordinate with the Governor's executive cabinet to develop an integrated approach to address human trafficking, to support the victims, and to prosecute the criminals to the fullest extent of the law.
- (2) The Governor's executive cabinet, and their designees, shall work with the Secretary of the Department of Human Services in such a manner as to assist in fulfilling the goals and objectives of this Order.
- (3) To fulfill the obligations of this Order, the Secretary of the Department of Human Services shall undertake the following duties:

- a) Evaluate current state agency policies and procedures related to human trafficking prevention;
 - b) Evaluate data from across the state government related to human trafficking;
 - c) Evaluate best practices from across the country to combat human trafficking;
 - d) Develop a statewide protocol for ensuring a coordinated approach to identify human trafficking victims; investigate human trafficking; access and provide specialized services to victims; and identify missing youth who are at risk of human trafficking; and
 - e) Work in partnership with local law enforcement, the Attorney General's Office, state circuit and district judges, juvenile probation officers, Children's Advocacy Centers, federal partners, human trafficking advocacy non-profits, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and service providers.
- (4) To the extent allowable by federal and state law, the Chief Data Officer and Chief Privacy Officer of the Division of Information Systems shall coordinate with the Governor's cabinet secretaries to facilitate the sharing of all relevant data related to human trafficking victims and to the objectives of this Order.
- (5) Within six months of the effective date of this Order, the Secretary of the Department of Human Services shall present to the Governor the following:
- a) A recommended standardized screening tool that may be implemented by state agencies, non-profits, and private industry to help identify victims and provide the necessary resources to assist them.
 - b) Updated human trafficking training and educational materials provided to local school districts.
 - i. The materials shall provide a list of quality local, state, and national resources for students, parents, counselors, or school personnel to consult for information on human trafficking and include strategies for the prevention of human trafficking.
 - c) An analysis of current statutory language and department rules related to the confidentiality of victim records, including recommended revisions to ensure that agencies can share data and information across systems to better prevent, identify, and serve victims.
 - d) Updated state protocol for assisting victims of human trafficking with applying for federal and state benefits and services, which

shall be made publicly accessible and shall be shared with the Governor's cabinet.

This Executive Order shall become effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or rescinded by further executive orders.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 14th day of February, in the year of our Lord 2023.



Sarah Huckabee Sanders

Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor of Arkansas

Attest

John Thurston

John Thurston, Secretary of State