



Testimony on H. 603
An Act Relating to Human Trafficking
House Judiciary Committee
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Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H. 603 and voice the Center's support for this legislation.

As the statewide grant administrator for victim services funding, a direct service provider, and a voice for victim/survivor rights in government, the Center has tracked and championed statewide efforts to improve human trafficking prosecution and prevention for many years. The Center participates on the statewide Human Trafficking Task Force and just last year awarded a federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant to the South Burlington Police Department for a new Human Trafficking Case Manager position. The Center also regularly sponsors training for victim service providers and allied professionals across disciplines to enhance services, raise awareness, and catalyze new partnerships and initiatives.

With respect to the specific provisions of H. 603, the Center fully supports the bill as introduced. To the extent the Committee considers any amendments, however, the Center would like to offer further comment to ensure that any proposed changes comply with the federal Rape Survivors Child Custody Act (RSCCA). RSCCA is a federal law that encourages states to adopt laws supporting the rights of women whose children were conceived by rape by limiting the child custody rights of their perpetrators. Last year, the General Assembly adopted a minor change to 15 V.S.A. § 665(f) that brought Vermont into full compliance with RSCCA and has resulted in bonus federal formula funds for victim services and domestic and sexual violence prosecution. H. 603 touches on some of the same provisions at issue, and while the as-introduced version of the bill meets the RSCCA criteria, the Center would like to weigh in on any further amendment to ensure that Vermont remains eligible for the federal bonus.