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For Immediate Release

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Governor Rauner Signs Bill Providing Critical Support for Survivors of Human Trafficking
SB 3007 to Provide Survivors Access to State-funded Assistance

Gov. Bruce Rauner signed SB 3007 into law yesterday. This legislation will extend critical services to immigrant survivors of human trafficking, torture, and other serious crimes.

SB 3007 will provide these survivors with access to state-funded assistance, including help with food, cash assistance, and health care, for up to one year while they are preparing their visa applications, and while awaiting a final decision on their visas, as long as they meet all other eligibility requirements for the programs.

Human trafficking victims previously only have been eligible to receive employment authorization and federally funded public benefits, such as food assistance and health care, after they receive a visa or are granted asylum. But the often lengthy processes left survivors without the support they needed while they were at their most vulnerable.

“This legislation will make Illinois a leader in the fight to end human trafficking,” said Rep. Lisa Hernandez, chief sponsor of SB 3007. “It will provide survivors of human trafficking with the support they need while they are cooperating with law enforcement to go after the perpetrators of the crimes against them.”

“America can take pride in opening her arms to individuals who have been victims of horrific crimes and are seeking a land of safety and opportunity,” said Sen. Jacqueline Collins, chief sponsor of SB3007, “we can carry on this welcoming tradition here in Illinois by assisting those affected – many of them women and children – while their cases are being evaluated.”

Heartland Alliance and the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law led advocacy for the passage of SB 3007. “SB 3007 provides the protection needed by survivors who are escaping trafficking, seeking safety, and highly vulnerable to further exploitation and harm.” said Dan Lesser, Director of Economic Justice at the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law.

The bill will go into effect January 1, 2018. “Although the bill won’t go into effect for over a year, this is a huge victory for Illinois and for immigrant survivors of violence,” said Kimberly Drew, Senior Project Manager of Economic Security Policy at Heartland Alliance, “It is well worth the wait.”

In addition to receiving bipartisan support in both chambers, SB 3007 was also supported by Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan and over 50 other human services providers, faith-based organizations, and community advocacy organizations that serve foreign-born victims of human trafficking and other serious crimes.

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