

Laurie Scott, MPP

Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock



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April 7, 2016

Mayor Roy Avis
Town of Fort Frances
320 Portage Ave
Fort Frances, ON P9A 3P9

Dear Mayor Avis,

I write to you today to ask you to support my efforts as MPP and PC Critic for Women's Issues, to call on the provincial government to take immediate steps to combat human trafficking in Ontario and to raise public awareness of this horrid crime.

Human trafficking is a heinous crime that has been referred to as nothing short of modern day slavery. It is one of the fastest growing crimes, and starts and stays in Canada – over 90 percent of victims are Canadian-born. Worse, Ontario is a major hub for human trafficking in Canada, as the proximity to cities along the Highway 401 corridor provides an accessible thoroughfare for traffickers, and the ability to keep victims isolated. Victims are lured over the internet, meaning that this crime is in our neighbourhoods, our communities and our towns.

Victims – predominantly girls averaging the age of 14, and shockingly as young as 11 – are lured into a nightmare that they can almost never escape on their own. Traffickers recruit, transport, harbour and control the girl next door for sexual exploitation or forced labour.

On February 18, 2016, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario unanimously supported Bill 158 on Second Reading, which aims to take immediate steps against human trafficking in Ontario.

The bill provides as follows:

- Declare February 22nd as Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Ontario;
- Allow for an application to be brought by a parent of a trafficking victim under the age of 18, a trafficking victim aged 18 or over or an authorized agent such as Covenant House to obtain a protection order from a judge to prohibit the trafficker from contacting or approaching the victim. Such an order would remain in place for a minimum of three years;

- Create a tort or civil action of human trafficking, allowing victims to sue their traffickers for damages and an accounting of profits; and
- Amend the definition of “sex offender” under *Christopher’s Law (Sex Offender Registry)*, 2000 to include criminal offences for trafficking of victims under the age of 18 years.

In May of last year, I also received unanimous support for a motion asking the Government of Ontario to immediately create a provincial task force to combat human trafficking in Ontario.

The task force would have a similar structure and funding model to the Guns and Gangs Task Force. A multi-jurisdictional task force made up of specially-trained police officers, Crown prosecutors, judges, and frontline workers would coordinate information sharing, and collaboratively work to apprehend criminals and rescue victims. Training and education would also have to be specialized not only for law enforcement and the justice system, but for victims’ services, health care workers, schools and businesses.

The task force was endorsed by the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, which I had the honour of co-chairing.

The two recommendations are as follows:

57. The Ontario government provide resources for the development of a coordinated approach to help victims of human trafficking, allowing providers of support services and the criminal justice system to share information and work collaboratively.

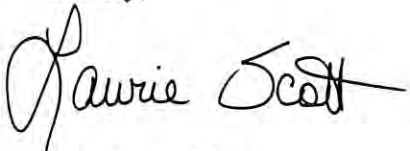
58. The Ontario government develop a multi-ministerial, province-wide strategy on human trafficking.

Ontario is far behind other provinces when it comes to combatting human trafficking and taking significant action. For instance, in Manitoba, they have enacted legislation as far back as 2012, which has seen multiple victims rescued and traffickers put behind bars for breaching protection orders.

I ask that you and your council members consider putting forward a resolution to support the following attached draft resolution.

I look forward to your support.

Sincerely,



Laurie Scott, MPP
Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock

**Municipal Resolution on Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force
and Bill 158, *Saving the Girl Next Door Act, 2016***

WHEREAS human trafficking is a heinous crime that has been referred to as modern day slavery; and

WHEREAS traffickers recruit, transport, harbour and control the girl next door for sexual exploitation or forced labour; and

WHEREAS it is one of the fastest growing crimes that starts and stays in Canada, targeting victims – 90 percent of which are Canadian-born and predominantly female, averaging the age of 14; and

WHEREAS Ontario is a major hub of human trafficking in Canada, and victims are lured, manipulated and coerced, often over the internet from every part of Ontario; and

WHEREAS human trafficking is in our neighbourhoods and our communities;

THEREFORE BE IT resolved that the Council of (name of municipality) support Bill 158, *Saving the Girl Next Door Act, 2016*, support MPP Laurie Scott's motion for a multi-jurisdictional and coordinated task force of law enforcement agencies, Crown prosecutors, judges, victims' services and frontline agencies; and

That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to all Members of Provincial Parliament and municipalities.