

Warner cosponsors bill to train airline personnel to combat human trafficking

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U.S. Sens. Mark R. Warner (D-VA) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)

have introduced legislation to combat human trafficking on commercial air flights. The *Stop Trafficking on Planes (STOP) Act* would require training for certain airline industry employees to recognize and report suspected human trafficking to law enforcement. The legislation builds on the Blue Lightning Initiative, a voluntary training program currently administered by the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Transportation to educate airline personnel to identify human trafficking indicators.

“Flight attendants are our eyes in the sky and are uniquely positioned to play a key role in fighting this scourge. By training flight attendants and airline employees to spot and report human trafficking, we can help save victims and bring to justice those committing this heinous crime,” **said Sen.**

Warner. “This bill will improve coordination and utilize infrastructure already in place to allow our airlines and our law enforcement to better combat human trafficking.”

“Flight attendants and other airline employees are on the front lines in the battle against trafficking. They want to help, and we need to arm them with the tools they need to identify and report these heinous crimes,” **said Sen. Klobuchar.** “Trafficking is now the third largest criminal enterprise in the world. As a former prosecutor, I’ve seen firsthand the horror and violence women and children suffer as victims of human trafficking. We need to step up efforts to stop trafficking wherever it exists – on land, at sea and in the sky. I look forward to working with Senator Warner and airline workers to

advance this important bill.”

“Everyone recognizes the horror of human trafficking, but we must turn our outrage into action,” **stated Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA.** “We commend Senator Klobuchar and Senator Warner for introducing this legislation that will allow us to stop traffickers from using our skyways as a means to transport innocents to a life of slavery. Trained Flight Attendants can serve as 100,000 eyes in the skies to save lives by recognizing and reporting signs of trafficking. The infrastructure already exists in aviation, we just have to tap into it so law enforcement can achieve justice for the victims.”

“Polaris is grateful for the leadership of Senators Klobuchar and Warner to combat human trafficking. We believe this legislation is an important step to ensure that individuals likely to encounter modern slavery in their daily work are trained to identify and respond to the crime appropriately,” **said Polaris, a leading nonprofit organization working to eradicate human trafficking.**

In 2002, then-Gov. Warner announced creation of a statewide Virginia AMBER Alert program to help law enforcement protect and recover missing and exploited children. In 2003, Gov. Warner authorized a federal, state, and local anti-gang strike force, and funded additional state and local prosecutors, as part of a coordinated law enforcement effort to combat a rise in gang-related crimes, including trafficking. As a member of the U.S. Senate, Sen. Warner supported the bipartisan *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act*, which was signed into law last May, in order to provide incentives for states to have a safe harbor provision to help ensure minors who are sold for sex aren’t prosecuted as defendants, but are instead treated as victims. The law also helps victims rebuild their lives by using fines and penalties against perpetrators to improve the availability of victim services.