

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA**

RESOLUTION 2026 –

WHEREAS, human trafficking is a grave violation of human rights that includes the exploitation of individuals through force, fraud, or coercion for labor or sexual purposes and affects communities worldwide, nationally and locally; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking remains a significant issue in the State of Florida, which consistently ranks among the states with the highest number of reported human trafficking cases in the United States and, according to recent research, an estimated more than 700,000 people in Florida were victims of human trafficking in 2024, including approximately 100,00 children targeted for sex trafficking and hundreds of thousands in forced labor situations; and Florida's extensive transportation networks, high risk industries, and population make the state particularly vulnerable to these crimes; and

WHEREAS, the National Human Trafficking Hotline has received thousands of signals from Florida and identified hundreds of trafficking cases each year, reflecting both the prevalence of trafficking and the need for continued vigilance and reporting; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking activity has also been documented within Hernando County, with local law enforcement and justice partners reporting human trafficking related charges and coordinated operations, including multi agency investigations that have resulted in the arrest of individuals involved in trafficking operations; and

WHEREAS, the population of Hernando County continues to grow, now serving over 218,000 residents making community awareness, cross agency coordination and public education vital components of combating human trafficking and protecting vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, traffickers find their victims through social networks, in neighborhoods, clubs, the internet and our schools. Girls and boys in the commercial sex trade are commonly between the ages of 11 to 15 years old; within 48 hours of running away, 1 out of 3 children is solicited for sex. Additionally, 1 in 4 children receives online sexual solicitation to exchange sexual imagery, engage in sexual talk, or participate in a sexual interaction over the internet in return for something of value while under 18; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking impacts individuals across all ages, genders, and backgrounds and requires a comprehensive community response that includes law enforcement, healthcare providers, social service agencies, educators, faith communities, businesses, and concerned citizens to prevent exploitation, identify victims, support survivors and prosecute offenders; and

WHEREAS, through You Thrive Florida Children's Advocacy Center of Hernando County, Nature Coast Human Trafficking Task Force and Warrior 321, our local community unites to combat human trafficking and brings together nonprofits, government and private sector businesses in prevention, prosecution, education and awareness efforts to restore freedom and dignity to survivors.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HERNANDO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Board of County Commissioners hereby proclaim January 2026 as **HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH** in Hernando County.

SECTION 2. The Board of County Commissioners encourage all citizens to recognize the importance of prevention, education and awareness of human trafficking in the country and throughout your local community.

ADOPTED in Regular Session this 13th day of January 2026, A.D.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Attest:

Douglas A. Chorvat, Jr.
Clerk of Circuit Court & Comptroller

Jerry Campbell
Chairman

John Allocco
Commissioner

Ryan Amsler
Vice Chairman

Brian Hawkins
Commissioner

Steve Champion
Second Vice Chairman