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### § 7101. Purposes and findings

#### (a) Purposes

The purposes of this chapter are to combat trafficking in persons, a contemporary manifestation of slavery whose victims are predominantly women and children, to ensure just and effective punishment of traffickers, and to protect their victims.

#### (b) Findings

Congress finds that:

(1) As the 21st century begins, the degrading institution of slavery continues throughout the world. Trafficking in persons is a modern form of slavery, and it is the largest manifestation of slavery today. At least 700,000 persons annually, primarily women and children, are trafficked within or across international borders. Approximately 50,000 women and children are trafficked into the United States each year.

(2) Many of these persons are trafficked into the international sex trade, often by force, fraud, or coercion. The sex industry has rapidly expanded over the past several decades. It involves sexual exploitation of persons, predominantly women and girls, involving activities related to prostitution, pornography, sex tourism, and other commercial sexual services. The low status of women in many parts of the world has contributed to a burgeoning of the trafficking industry.

(3) Trafficking in persons is not limited to the sex industry. This growing transnational crime also includes forced labor and involves significant violations of labor, public health, and human rights standards worldwide.

(4) Traffickers primarily target women and girls, who are disproportionately affected by poverty, the lack of access to education, chronic unemployment, discrimination, and the lack of economic opportunities in countries of origin. Traffickers lure women and girls into their networks through false promises of decent working conditions at relatively good pay as nannies, maids, dancers, factory workers, restaurant workers, sales clerks, or models. Traffickers also buy children from

poor families and sell them into prostitution or into various types of forced or bonded labor.

(5) Traffickers often transport victims from their home communities to unfamiliar destinations, including foreign countries away from family and friends, religious institutions, and other sources of protection and support, leaving the victims defenseless and vulnerable.

(6) Victims are often forced through physical violence to engage in sex acts or perform slavery-like labor. Such force includes rape and other forms of sexual abuse, torture, starvation, imprisonment, threats, psychological abuse, and coercion.

(7) Traffickers often make representations to their victims that physical harm may occur to them or others should the victim escape or attempt to escape. Such representations can have the same coercive effects on victims as direct threats to inflict such harm.

(8) Trafficking in persons is increasingly perpetrated by organized, sophisticated criminal enterprises. Such trafficking is the fastest growing source of profits for organized criminal enterprises worldwide. Profits from the trafficking industry contribute to the expansion of organized crime in the United States and worldwide. Trafficking in persons is often aided by official corruption in countries of origin, transit, and destination, thereby threatening the rule of law.

(9) Trafficking includes all the elements of the crime of forcible rape when it involves the involuntary participation of another person in sex acts by means of fraud, force, or coercion.

(10) Trafficking also involves violations of other laws, including labor and immigration codes and laws against kidnapping, slavery, false imprisonment, assault, battery, pandering, fraud, and extortion.

(11) Trafficking exposes victims to serious health risks. Women and children trafficked in the sex industry are exposed to deadly diseases, including HIV and AIDS. Trafficking victims are sometimes worked or physically brutalized to death.

(12) Trafficking in persons substantially affects interstate and foreign commerce. Trafficking for such purposes as involuntary servitude, peonage, and other forms of forced labor has an impact on the nationwide employment network and labor market. Within the context of slavery, servitude, and labor or services which are obtained or maintained through coercive conduct that amounts to a condition of servitude, victims are subjected to a range of violations.

(13) Involuntary servitude statutes are intended to reach cases in which persons are held in a condition of servitude through non-violent coercion. In *United States v. Kozminski*, 487 U.S. 931 (1988), the Supreme Court found that section 1584 of title 18, should be narrowly interpreted, absent a definition of involuntary servitude by Congress. As a result, that section was interpreted to criminalize only servitude that is brought about through use or threatened use of physical or legal coercion, and to exclude other conduct that can have the same purpose and effect.

(14) Existing legislation and law enforcement in the United States and other countries

are inadequate to deter trafficking and bring traffickers to justice, failing to reflect the gravity of the offenses involved. No comprehensive law exists in the United States that penalizes the range of offenses involved in the trafficking scheme. Instead, even the most brutal instances of trafficking in the sex industry are often punished under laws that also apply to lesser offenses, so that traffickers typically escape deserved punishment.

(15) In the United States, the seriousness of this crime and its components is not reflected in current sentencing guidelines, resulting in weak penalties for convicted traffickers.

(16) In some countries, enforcement against traffickers is also hindered by official indifference, by corruption, and sometimes even by official participation in trafficking.

(17) Existing laws often fail to protect victims of trafficking, and because victims are often illegal immigrants in the destination country, they are repeatedly punished more harshly than the traffickers themselves.

(18) Additionally, adequate services and facilities do not exist to meet victims' needs regarding health care, housing, education, and legal assistance, which safely reintegrate trafficking victims into their home countries.

(19) Victims of severe forms of trafficking should not be inappropriately incarcerated, fined, or otherwise penalized solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked, such as using false documents, entering the country without documentation, or working without documentation.

(20) Because victims of trafficking are frequently unfamiliar with the laws, cultures, and languages of the countries into which they have been trafficked, because they are often subjected to coercion and intimidation including physical detention and debt bondage, and because they often fear retribution and forcible removal to countries in which they will face retribution or other hardship, these victims often find it difficult or impossible to report the crimes committed against them or to assist in the investigation and prosecution of such crimes.

(21) Trafficking of persons is an evil requiring concerted and vigorous action by countries of origin, transit or destination, and by international organizations.

(22) One of the founding documents of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of all people. It states that all men are created equal and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. The right to be free from slavery and involuntary servitude is among those unalienable rights. Acknowledging this fact, the United States outlawed slavery and involuntary servitude in 1865, recognizing them as evil institutions that must be abolished. Current practices of sexual slavery and trafficking of women and children are similarly abhorrent to the principles upon which the United States was founded.

(23) The United States and the international community agree that trafficking in persons involves grave violations of human rights and

is a matter of pressing international concern. The international community has repeatedly condemned slavery and involuntary servitude, violence against women, and other elements of trafficking, through declarations, treaties, and United Nations resolutions and reports, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery; the 1948 American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man; the 1957 Abolition of Forced Labor Convention; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 50/167, 51/66, and 52/98; the Final Report of the World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children (Stockholm, 1996); the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995); and the 1991 Moscow Document of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

(24) Trafficking in persons is a transnational crime with national implications. To deter international trafficking and bring its perpetrators to justice, nations including the United States must recognize that trafficking is a serious offense. This is done by prescribing appropriate punishment, giving priority to the prosecution of trafficking offenses, and protecting rather than punishing the victims of such offenses. The United States must work bilaterally and multilaterally to abolish the trafficking industry by taking steps to promote cooperation among countries linked together by international trafficking routes. The United States must also urge the international community to take strong action in multilateral fora to engage recalcitrant countries in serious and sustained efforts to eliminate trafficking and protect trafficking victims.

(Pub. L. 106-386, div. A, §102, Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1466.)

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in subsec. (a), was in the original "this division", meaning division A of Pub. L. 106-386, Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1466, known as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of division A to the Code, see Short Title note set out below and Tables.

#### SHORT TITLE OF 2019 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 115-427, §1, Jan. 9, 2019, 132 Stat. 5503, provided that: "This Act [amending sections 7102, 7104, 7106, and 7107 of this title and enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 262d and 7107 of this title] may be cited as the "Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2017."

Pub. L. 115-425, §1, Jan. 8, 2019, 132 Stat. 5472, provided that: "This Act [enacting section 7104e of this title, amending sections 2370c to 2370c-2, 7103, 7104, 7105, 7106 to 7108, 7110, and 7112 of this title, section 1375c of Title 8, Aliens and Nationality, sections 20705, 20709, and 21509 of Title 34, Crime Control and Law Enforcement, and section 40118 of Title 49, Transportation, and enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 2370c and 7107 of this title, section 1201 of Title 41, Public Contracts, and section 40118 of Title 49] may be cited as the

‘Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2018’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 110-457, §1(a), Dec. 23, 2008, 122 Stat. 5044, provided that: “This Act [see Tables for classification] may be cited as the ‘William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 2006 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 109-164, §1(a), Jan. 10, 2006, 119 Stat. 3558, provided that: “This Act [enacting sections 7111 and 7112 of this title, sections 2428, 3271, and 3272 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, and sections 14044 to 14044e of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, amending sections 4028, 7103 to 7107, 7109a, and 7110 of this title and sections 1956 and 1961 of Title 18, and enacting provisions set out as notes under this section and sections 7105 and 7106 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2006’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 2003 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 108-193, §1, Dec. 19, 2003, 117 Stat. 2875, provided that: “This Act [enacting section 7109a of this title and section 1595 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, amending sections 2152d, 7102 to 7107, and 7110 of this title, sections 1101, 1182, 1184, and 1255 of Title 8, Aliens and Nationality, and sections 1591 and 1961 of Title 18, enacting provisions set out as notes under this section and section 7103 of this title, and repealing provisions set out as a note under section 7103 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003’.”

SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 106-386, §1, Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1464, provided that: “This Act [see Tables for classification] may be cited as the ‘Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000’.”

Pub. L. 106-386, div. A, §101, Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1466, provided that: “This division [enacting this chapter, section 2152d of this title, and sections 1589 to 1594 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, and amending sections 2151n and 2304 of this title, sections 1101, 1182, 1184, and 1255 of Title 8, Aliens and Nationality, and sections 1581, 1583, and 1584 of Title 18] may be cited as the ‘Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000’.”

PROMOTING EFFECTIVE STATE ENFORCEMENT

Pub. L. 110-457, title II, §225, Dec. 23, 2008, 122 Stat. 5072, as amended by Pub. L. 113-4, title XII, §1243, Mar. 7, 2013, 127 Stat. 154, provided that:

“(a) RELATIONSHIP AMONG FEDERAL AND STATE LAW.—Nothing in this Act [see Short Title of 2008 Amendment note above], the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 [see Short Title note above], the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 [see Short Title of 2003 Amendment note above], the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 [see Short Title of 2006 Amendment note above], chapters 77 and 117 of title 18, United States Code, or any model law issued by the Department of Justice to carry out the purposes of any of the aforementioned statutes—

“(1) may be construed to treat prostitution as a valid form of employment under Federal law; or

“(2) shall preempt, supplant, or limit the effect of any State or Federal criminal law.

“(b) MODEL STATE CRIMINAL PROVISIONS.—In addition to any model State antitrafficking statutes in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 23, 2008], the Attorney General shall facilitate the promulgation of a model State statute that—

“(1) furthers a comprehensive approach to investigation and prosecution through modernization of State and local prostitution and pandering statutes;

“(2) protects children exploited through prostitution by including safe harbor provisions that—

“(A) treat an individual under 18 years of age who has been arrested for engaging in, or attempting to

engage in, a sexual act with another person in exchange for monetary compensation as a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons;

“(B) prohibit the charging or prosecution of an individual described in subparagraph (A) for a prostitution offense;

“(C) require the referral of an individual described in subparagraph (A) to appropriate service providers, including comprehensive service or community-based programs that provide assistance to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation; and

“(D) provide that an individual described in subparagraph (A) shall not be required to prove fraud, force, or coercion in order to receive the protections described under this paragraph;

“(3) is based in part on the provisions of the Act of August 15, 1935 (49 Stat. 651; D.C. Code 22-2701 et seq.) (relating to prostitution and pandering).

“(c) DISTRIBUTION.—The model statute described in subsection (b) and the text of chapter 27 of the Criminal Code of the District of Columbia (D.C. Code 22-2701 et seq.) shall be—

“(1) posted on the website of the Department of Justice; and

“(2) distributed to the Attorney General of each State.”

[Amendment by section 1243 of Pub. L. 113-4, which directed amendment of section 225(b) of the Trafficking Victims Reauthorization Act of 2008, was executed by amending section 225(b) of Pub. L. 110-457, the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008, set out above, to reflect the probable intent of Congress.]

CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS

Pub. L. 109-164, §2, Jan. 10, 2006, 119 Stat. 3558, provided that: “Congress finds the following:

“(1) The United States has demonstrated international leadership in combating human trafficking and slavery through the enactment of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (division A of Public Law 106-386; 22 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.) and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-193) [see Short Title of 2003 Amendment note above].

“(2) The United States Government currently estimates that 600,000 to 800,000 individuals are trafficked across international borders each year and exploited through forced labor and commercial sex exploitation. An estimated 80 percent of such individuals are women and girls.

“(3) Since the enactment of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 [Oct. 28, 2000], United States efforts to combat trafficking in persons have focused primarily on the international trafficking in persons, including the trafficking of foreign citizens into the United States.

“(4) Trafficking in persons also occurs within the borders of a country, including the United States.

“(5) No known studies exist that quantify the problem of trafficking in children for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation in the United States. According to a report issued by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania in 2001, as many as 300,000 children in the United States are at risk for commercial sexual exploitation, including trafficking, at any given time.

“(6) Runaway and homeless children in the United States are highly susceptible to being domestically trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation. According to the National Runaway Switchboard, every day in the United States, between 1,300,000 and 2,800,000 runaway and homeless youth live on the streets. One out of every seven children will run away from home before the age of 18.

“(7) Following armed conflicts and during humanitarian emergencies, indigenous populations face increased security challenges and vulnerabilities which result in myriad forms of violence, including traffick-

ing for sexual and labor exploitation. Foreign policy and foreign aid professionals increasingly recognize the increased activity of human traffickers in post-conflict settings and during humanitarian emergencies.

“(8) There is a need to protect populations in post-conflict settings and humanitarian emergencies from being trafficked for sexual or labor exploitation. The efforts of aid agencies to address the protection needs of, among others, internally displaced persons and refugees are useful in this regard. Nonetheless, there is a need for further integrated programs and strategies at the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense to combat human trafficking, including through protection and prevention methodologies, in post-conflict environments and during humanitarian emergencies.

“(9) International and human rights organizations have documented a correlation between international deployments of military and civilian peacekeepers and aid workers and a resulting increase in the number of women and girls trafficked into prostitution in post-conflict regions.

“(10) The involvement of employees and contractors of the United States Government and members of the Armed Forces in trafficking in persons, facilitating the trafficking in persons, or exploiting the victims of trafficking in persons is inconsistent with United States laws and policies and undermines the credibility and mission of United States Government programs in post-conflict regions.

“(11) Further measures are needed to ensure that United States Government personnel and contractors are held accountable for involvement with acts of trafficking in persons, including by expanding United States criminal jurisdiction to all United States Government contractors abroad.”

Pub. L. 108-193, § 2, Dec. 19, 2003, 117 Stat. 2875, provided that: “Congress finds the following:

“(1) Trafficking in persons continues to victimize countless men, women, and children in the United States and abroad.

“(2) Since the enactment of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (division A of Public Law 106-386) [see Short Title note above], the United States Government has made significant progress in investigating and prosecuting acts of trafficking and in responding to the needs of victims of trafficking in the United States and abroad.

“(3) On the other hand, victims of trafficking have faced unintended obstacles in the process of securing needed assistance, including admission to the United States under section 101(a)(15)(T)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act [8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(T)(i)].

“(4) Additional research is needed to fully understand the phenomenon of trafficking in persons and to determine the most effective strategies for combating trafficking in persons.

“(5) Corruption among foreign law enforcement authorities continues to undermine the efforts by governments to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers.

“(6) International Law Enforcement Academies should be more fully utilized in the effort to train law enforcement authorities, prosecutors, and members of the judiciary to address trafficking in persons-related crimes.”

## § 7102. Definitions

In this chapter:

### (1) Abuse or threatened abuse of law or legal process

The term “abuse or threatened abuse of the legal process” means the use or threatened use of a law or legal process, whether administrative, civil, or criminal, in any manner or for any purpose for which the law was not de-

signed, in order to exert pressure on another person to cause that person to take some action or refrain from taking some action.

### (2) Appropriate congressional committees

The term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives.

### (3) Coercion

The term “coercion” means—

(A) threats of serious harm to or physical restraint against any person;

(B) any scheme, plan, or pattern intended to cause a person to believe that failure to perform an act would result in serious harm to or physical restraint against any person; or

(C) the abuse or threatened abuse of the legal process.

### (4) Commercial sex act

The term “commercial sex act” means any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person.

### (5) Concrete actions

The term “concrete actions” means actions that demonstrate increased efforts by the government of a country to meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, including any of the following:

(A) Enforcement actions taken.

(B) Investigations actively underway.

(C) Prosecutions conducted.

(D) Convictions attained.

(E) Training provided.

(F) Programs and partnerships actively underway.

(G) Efforts to prevent severe forms of trafficking, including programs to reduce the vulnerability of particularly vulnerable populations, involving survivors of trafficking in community engagement and policy making, engagement with foreign migrants, ending recruitment fees, and other such measures.

(H) Victim services offered, including immigration services and restitution.

(I) The amount of money the government has committed to the actions described in subparagraphs (A) through (H).

### (6) Credible information

The term “credible information” includes all of the following:

(A) Reports by the Department of State.

(B) Reports of other Federal agencies, including the Department of Labor’s List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor and List of Products Produced by Forced Labor or Indentured Child Labor.

(C) Documentation provided by a foreign country, including—

(i) copies of relevant laws, regulations, and policies adopted or modified; and

(ii) an official record of enforcement actions taken, judicial proceedings, training conducted, consultations conducted, programs and partnerships launched, and services provided.