



January 4, 2022

Fellow Montanans,

January is Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month in Montana. Generating an estimated \$150 billion worldwide per year, human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery whereby traffickers, which are often organized criminal enterprises, profit at the expense of adults or children by compelling them to perform labor or engage in commercial sex.

Cases of human trafficking have increased in recent years. In 2015, the Montana Department of Justice tracked seven human trafficking cases in Montana. In 2021, however, 41 cases were tracked, a 485-percent increase. Tragically, human trafficking is also a contributing factor to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people in our state.

Fortunately, Montana has an outstanding network of non-profit organizations working to support survivors and promote awareness of human trafficking. We're also encouraged by private businesses and industry associations committing resources to prevent human trafficking, and law enforcement agencies throughout the state increasing efforts to stop these crimes and hold criminals accountable.

During the month of January, we encourage you to be a part of the solution to end human trafficking by learning to identify signs and committing to report suspected human trafficking activity to law enforcement. An informed, engaged citizenry is one of the best tools we have to put an end to these despicable crimes.

Sincerely,



Greg Gianforte
Governor of Montana



Austin Knudsen
Attorney General of Montana