

CO-SPONSOR MEMO

TO: Legislative Colleagues

FROM: Rep. Robert Wittke and Sen. Van Wanggaard

DATE: May 1, 2025

RE: Co-sponsor LRB 2836/3005 relating to: human trafficking and trafficking of a child and providing a penalty.

LRB 2836/3005 is legislation that would address critical gaps in Wisconsin's handling of human trafficking and child trafficking crimes.

Currently, under Wisconsin law, felony charges — including for trafficking — are limited by a six-year statute of limitations. This poses serious challenges when victims, often enduring years of trauma and instability, are not able to safely disclose their abuse within that narrow window. In a recent case, a survivor first disclosed acts that occurred in 2008-2009. Without a more recent disclosure, state prosecution would have been impossible, forcing reliance on federal prosecution.

Shockingly, while child sexual assault for victims under 13 can be prosecuted until the victim is 45 years old, the trafficking of children does not have a similarly extended timeframe. This disparity leaves victims of trafficking without a meaningful opportunity for justice.

The bill creates mandatory minimum prison sentences for certain child sex offenses and human trafficking crimes:

- **Child Sex Trafficking (s. 948.051):** If convicted, the offender must receive a prison sentence with at least 15 years of confinement.
- **Human Trafficking (s. 940.302):** If convicted, the offender must receive a prison sentence with at least 10 years of confinement.
- **Prosecution Timeframe:** Prosecutors have up to 10 years after the crime to bring charges for human trafficking.
- **Penalty Increases:**
 - The severity of trafficking crimes and benefiting from trafficking is raised from a Class D felony to a **Class C felony**.
 - For child sex trafficking and benefiting from it, the penalty is raised from a Class C felony to a **Class B felony**.

Traffickers ruin lives and often continue to exert control even while incarcerated. Victims deserve the assurance that justice will be meaningful, certain, and lasting.

If you would like to be listed as a co-sponsor of LRB 2836/3005, please contact Rep. Wittke 9163 or Sen. Wanggaard 61832 on or before May 8, 2025. You will be added to both Assembly and Senate bills unless you notify us.