

House Bill No. 7181

An act relating to immigrant survivors of human trafficking and other serious crimes; requiring the Department of Children and Family Services to provide services to immigrant survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence, and other serious crimes; providing for the same state and local benefits that refugees receive; ensuring that immigrant survivors of serious crimes have access to state-funded services for refugees; providing survivors of serious crimes with supportive services; creating a state-funded component of the cash, medical, and social services programs for refugees to serve victims during a temporary waiting period; providing that a sworn statement by a victim is sufficient evidence for the purposes of determining eligibility for services if supported by at least one piece of additional evidence; providing for a public-awareness program for employers and other organizations that may come into contact with immigrant survivors of human trafficking; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. The Department of Children and Family Services shall establish a structure by which the department shall:

(1) Provide services to immigrant survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence, and other serious crimes, during the interim period between the time the survivor applies for a visa and receives such visa from the United States Department of Homeland Security or receives certification from the United States Department of Health and Human Services;

(2) Ensure that immigrant survivors of serious crimes are eligible to receive existing state and local benefits and services to the same extent that refugees receive those benefits and services;

(3) Ensure that immigrant survivors of serious crimes have access to state-funded services that are equivalent to the federal programs that provide cash, medical services, and social service for refugees;

(4) Provide survivors of serious crimes with medical care, mental health care, and basic assistance in order to help them secure housing, food, and supportive services;

(5) Create a state-funded component of the cash, medical, and social services programs for refugees for the purpose of serving immigrant survivors during the temporary period while they wait for federal processing to be completed;

(6) Provide that a sworn statement by a survivor is sufficient evidence for the purposes of determining eligibility if that statement is supported by at least one item of additional evidence, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Police and court records;
- (b) News articles;
- (c) Documentation from a professional agency;
- (d) Physical evidence; or
- (e) A statement from an individual having knowledge of the circumstances providing the basis for the claim;
- (7) Develop a public-awareness program for employers and other organizations that may come into contact with immigrant survivors of human trafficking in order to provide education and raise awareness of the problem.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.

Approved by the Governor June 15, 2007.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 15, 2007.