



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose Peralta

## Senator Jose Peralta commends Governor Cuomo on signing a sex trafficking package which includes his bill to reclassify sex trafficking as a violent felony

JOSE PERALTA October 21, 2015

State Senator Jose Peralta (D-East Elmhurst) applauded Governor Andrew Cuomo for signing a sex trafficking package into law, a comprehensive proposal that includes Senator Peralta's legislation that reclassifies sex trafficking as a violent felony. The new measure toughens penalties for first time offenders, raising the minimum jail sentence to five years from the current one-to-three years.

Under the anti-human trafficking bill, promoting prostitution and sex trafficking will be considered a class B felony punishable by a minimum of five years in prison and a maximum of 25 years. The legislation was approved by the New York Senate in January and by the Assembly in March.

"I want to commend Governor Cuomo for signing into law this crucial legislation that seeks to eradicate human trafficking," Senator Peralta said. "As this is a pervasive issue in my district, putting an end to modern day slavery is the moral issue of our time."

Senator Peralta noted, "Men, women and children from around the world and the country are brought here to New York, and especially to Roosevelt Avenue, the mecca, the epicenter of human trafficking in Queens, to be enslaved and forced to have sex for the profit of

human traffickers and pimps.”

Although New York State has the most comprehensive human trafficking in the nation, the prior law did not reflect the inherent violence of sex trafficking. This law designates promoting prostitution and compelling prostitution as a class B violent felonies.

“I have worked to fight sex trafficking on many different fronts because there are only a few things more abhorrent than forcing a helpless individual into the sex trade,” Senator Peralta said. “There is a long way to go toward helping victims of sex traffickers and cracking down on the predators who exploit them, but this is a step, a very good step, in the right direction.”

There are an estimated 17,500 foreign national trafficked into the United States every year, according to Restore NY, an organization fighting to end sex trafficking in New York.

Senator Peralta added, “Prostitution is not a victimless crime. The mental and physical torture these women go through is most certainly a violent crime.”