

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2025 REGULAR SESSION**

### **Committee Substitute**

**for**

### **Senate Bill 173**

By Senator Chapman

[Reported February 19, 2025, from the Committee on  
Health and Human Resources]

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new section, designated §16-6-26, relating to permitting hotels and public lodging establishments to provide human trafficking awareness training to employees; establishing permissive annual training; establishing reporting procedures; providing that no private cause of action is created; and authorizing rulemaking.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE                    6.                    HOTELS                    AND                    RESTAURANTS.**

**§16-6-26. Human trafficking awareness training and policies for employees of hotels and public lodging establishments; rulemaking.**

(a) A hotel or public lodging establishment may:

(1) Provide annual training regarding human trafficking awareness to employees of the establishment who perform housekeeping duties in the rental units or who work at the front desk or reception area where guests ordinarily check in or check out;

(2) By January 1, 2026, implement a procedure for the reporting of suspected human trafficking to the National Human Trafficking Hotline or to a local law enforcement agency; and

(3) By January 1, 2026, post in a conspicuous location in the establishment which is accessible to employees a human trafficking public awareness sign at least 11 inches by 15 inches in size, printed in an easily legible font and in at least 32-point type, which states in English and Spanish and any other language predominantly spoken in that area which the local board of health deems appropriate substantially the following or similar language having the same meaning:

"If you or someone you know is being forced to engage in an activity and cannot leave, whether it is prostitution, housework, farm work, factory work, retail work, restaurant work, or any other activity, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 888-373-7888 or text INFO or HELP to 233-733 to access help and services. Victims of slavery and human trafficking are protected under United States and West Virginia Law."

(b) The human trafficking awareness training permitted under this section shall include, at

a minimum, all of the following:

(1) The definition of human trafficking and the difference between the two forms of human trafficking: sex trafficking and labor trafficking;

(2) Guidance specific to the hotel and public lodging sector concerning how to identify individuals who may be victims of human trafficking; and

(3) Guidance concerning the role of the employees of a hotel or public lodging establishment in reporting and responding to suspected human trafficking.

(c) This section does not establish a private cause of action. This section does not alter or limit any other existing remedies available to survivors of human trafficking.

(d) The Bureau for Public Health may propose rules for legislative approval in accordance with §29A-3-1 *et seq.* as it deems necessary to carry out the provisions of this section. The bureau may promulgate emergency rules pursuant to the provisions of §29A-3-15 as it deems necessary.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to permit a hotel or public lodging establishment to provide annual training regarding human trafficking awareness to employees and to provide for rulemaking.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.