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Archdiocese of Hartford Engages Wethersfield Town Council to Curtail Human Trafficking

The Wethersfield Town Council on Monday voted unanimously to adopt an ordinance that aims to curtail human trafficking by implementing new licensing and operational standards for massage therapy establishments. Ordinance O26-005 introduces an array of safeguards and enforcement protocols to ensure that such establishments are not used as fronts for prostitution. The foundation for the ordinance was introduced to the Wethersfield Town Council by members of the Archdiocese of Hartford Human Trafficking Task Force and the Social Action Committee of Christ the King Parish.

Recognizing the need to extract human trafficking victims from situations where they are being exploited, both the Archdiocese of Hartford Human Trafficking Task Force and the Social Action Committee of Christ the King Parish engaged with members of the Wethersfield Town Council and Police Department for over two months in helping to establish a framework for the ordinance based on guidelines that have proven successful in other towns in Connecticut. After the unanimous victory in Wethersfield, the Human Trafficking Task Force plans to begin work with other towns where prostitution and trafficking are similarly widespread, noting the importance of targeting the traffickers, and not the trafficked.

“We know that the majority of trafficking victims in the particular context of the spaces covered by these ordinances are between the ages of 33 and 55 and are often mothers, desperate to support their families back home,” says Michael Rogers, Director of Mission and Archdiocesan Initiatives. “By working in our communities to eliminate demand by targeting the establishments and their traffickers, rather than the victims of trafficking, we hope to continue to build communities where the dignity of each person is respected and where a commitment to the common good can allow all to flourish.”

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