



WE'RE HERE TO HELP WHEN PEOPLE NEED US MOST

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**RE: Victim Services of Durham Region (VSDR) Submission to the Committee on G251:
Combatting Human Trafficking**

To Whom It May Concern,

Victim Services of Durham Region (VSDR) would like to provide a submission to the Committee on Justice Policy regarding Bill G251: Combatting Human Trafficking. We feel the bill is missing these vital components. Here are five concrete suggestions to add to the Bill.

1. Survivor debt forgiveness – human trafficking (HT) survivors often experience debt that is accrued beyond their control including student debt or debts made fraudulently in their name. Bill G251 should be amended to incorporate a debt forgiveness program for outstanding debts to be forgiven on compassionate grounds, to help survivors to move on from their victimization.
2. Survivors should be given the option to give testimony remotely in Victim Services offices instead of in courthouses facing their abusers – considering adjustments made during the Covid pandemic, we feel that there is no reason to make survivors to go to courthouses post-Covid. Victim Services across the province, in partnership with the Victim Witness Assistance Program, can provide the infrastructure necessary for remote testimony, lowering barriers to testifying for survivors in a way that is also more therapeutic and healing.
3. Bill G251 should address mandatory HT prevention curriculum in middle school and high schools.

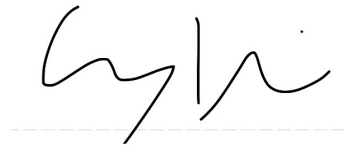
VICTIM SERVICES OF DURHAM REGION

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4. Police and CAS units with specialization in HT should have mandatory training in understanding bias, anti-oppressive practice, anti-racism and trauma-informed care.
5. At the municipal level, all Ontario Works and ODSP offices should have specialized Human Trafficking teams.

We must think about human trafficking in the context of human rights. We must also consider that people who are targeted are predominately racialized and Indigenous.

Sincerely,



Carly Kalish

Victim Services of Durham Region Executive Director