



Legislation introduced to help victims of human trafficking

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The Trafficking Survivors Relief Act of 2016 would help victims of human trafficking nationwide – and the push for its passage is starting right here in New York.

While in Rochester on Monday, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand talked about the work Congress is doing good work to prevent human trafficking – but she says it's not enough.

Now, she wants to be sure that survivors get the help they need as well.

So many survivors don't make it to my age range," said Jennifer Wolfley, a survivor of human trafficking. "They usually pass away much sooner from drug addiction, mental health issues like suicide, and other health factors."

Gillibrand is pushing Congress to act quickly to clear the criminal records of survivors forced to commit crimes while enslaved.

"Victims of sexual slavery end up branded as prostitutes. Victims of labor slavery could even end up tagged as conspirators in organized crime," she said. "Many of these victims are women under the age of 18 who then have to live their entire adult lives with a criminal record at no fault of their own."

With those records, survivors often face barriers to education, loans, and employment. Local law enforcement hopes this act is passed quickly by Congress.

"It's not only compassionate, but it's common sense," said Rochester Police Chief Michael Ciminelli. "It gives these individuals an opportunity to not only survive, but flourish."

The need in the Rochester area alone is staggering – The Center for Youth in Rochester worked with 87 young victims in 2015 alone.

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