



Congress Urged to Establish the First Specialized Human Trafficking Courts

Initiative by Anti-Trafficking Leader Jaco Booyens Ministries Marks Critical Step Toward Justice



Washington, D.C. — Jaco Booyens Ministries (JBM), among the nation’s leading anti-trafficking nonprofit organizations, is calling on Congress to remedy a lack of effective prosecution of human traffickers by creating specialized Human Trafficking Courts (HTCs). JBM believes U.S. and state justice systems are failing to adequately prosecute human traffickers despite a quarter century of passing robust anti-trafficking laws, providing funding for task forces, and raising public awareness campaigns. Whereas tens of thousands of individuals are trafficked every year, the federal government prosecutes an average of just 184 true trafficking cases annually. At the state level, prosecutors can obtain trafficking convictions no more than 45% of the time. Extensive research suggests this poor output could be caused by insufficient expertise in the judiciary to handle these notoriously complex cases.

JBM unveiled its plan for HTCs in a groundbreaking [white paper](#) published on July 15, 2025, with the support of its *pro bono* counsel at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, LLP. This innovative court system would feature judges with expertise to handle the unique and complex nature of human trafficking cases—both criminal and civil—ensuring faster, smarter, and more effective adjudications that stop predators in their tracks and prioritize survivor well-being.

“Human trafficking cases are very complicated. The current justice system lets far too many trafficking cases slip through the cracks due to a lack of subject-matter expertise,” said Jaco Booyens, founder of

JBM. “Specialized courts will eliminate unnecessary delays and lost opportunities. Survivors deserve a justice system that moves with the urgency and care their stories demand.”

The proposal calls for at least one federal HTC judge to preside in every state, with multiple judges in high-volume regions like California and Texas. HTCs would have exclusive jurisdiction over all federal trafficking and trafficking-related matters. The plan also empowers state prosecutors to prosecute these federal crimes in this specialized venue through an already existing cross-designation mechanism, offering states a powerful tool to achieving justice where their own justice systems are inadequate.

HTCs are further designed to be cost-effective by utilizing existing court infrastructure and resources. And HTCs will adopt trauma-informed procedures, such as two-way video testimony, enabling survivors and witnesses to participate safely and confidently in the legal process.

“The concept of channeling hard cases that require fast resolution to specialized judges is not a new concept in American law,” says Matthew Noxxel, counsel at Akin. “For example, Congress did it in the Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1978. And states are doing it in droves by creating specialized business courts. Is justice for trafficking survivors not more worthy a cause for expertise than corporate reorganizations and botched mergers?”

This bold initiative has already secured strong backing from numerous U.S. Senators, Representatives, academics, prosecutors, investigators, and leading anti-trafficking organizations, signaling a rare bipartisan and sector-wide consensus to address this urgent national crisis. JBM believes justice is not a luxury—it is a lifeline for survivors and a safeguard for society. And therefore, the United States must seize this moment to revolutionize how America combats one of its darkest crimes.

Media Contact:

Jillian Anderson — Jillianalexisa@gmail.com

Ilonka@helpjbm.org

www.HelpJBM.org