

**PROCLAMATION DECLARING JANUARY 2015 AS
NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH**

WHEREAS, the United States was founded on the principle that all people are born with an unalienable right to freedom -- an ideal that has driven the engine of American progress throughout our history. During National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, we acknowledge that forms of slavery still exist in the modern era, and we recommit ourselves to stopping the human traffickers who pursue this horrific trade; and

WHEREAS, the millions of victims of Human Trafficking have many faces, they are men and women, adults and children; yet, all are denied basic human dignity and freedom. Whether they are trapped in forced sexual exploitation or labor, many victims are held against their will through threats and fear of death. All too often suffering from horrible physical and sexual abuse, it is hard for them to imagine that there might be a place of refuge; and

WHEREAS, from 2007 and 2014 a total of 737 incidents of human trafficking were reported in the state of Texas with 628 victims assisted, including 320 child victims, 210 suspects arrested and 85 suspects convicted, ; and

WHEREAS, throughout the month of January we highlight the many fronts in the ongoing battle for civil rights -- including the efforts of the *Rio Grande Valley Human Trafficking Coalition*, which is comprised of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, victim service agencies, and social service providers in Hidalgo County, who are working to end human trafficking; and

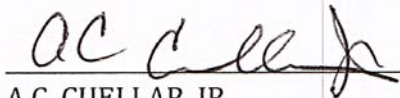
WHEREAS, as a community we must join together to provide a safe haven by protecting victims and prosecuting traffickers by improving victim identification, providing medical and social services, training for first responders, and increasing public awareness. This will encourage the men, women, and children who have suffered this scourge to overcome the bonds of modern slavery, receive protection and justice, and successfully reclaim their rightful independence.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Hidalgo County Commissioners Court hereby proclaims January 2015 as National Human Trafficking Prevention Month. I call upon the people of the Hidalgo County to recognize the vital role we can play in ending Human Trafficking and to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities.

Dated this 20th day of January, 2015.



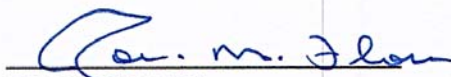
RAMON GARCIA
County Judge



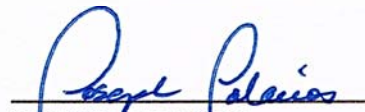
A.C. CUELLAR, JR.
County Commissioner, Pct. 1



EDUARDO "EDDIE" CANTU
County Commissioner, Pct. 2



JOE M. FLORES
County Commissioner, Pct. 3



JOSEPH PALACIOS
County Commissioner, Pct. 4


Attest: ARTURO GUAJARDO, JR.

County Clerk