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Rep. Riddle on Enforcement of House Bill 416

SPRING, TEXAS - Representative Riddle passed legislation during the most recent legislative session in Austin to require health care facilities that provide abortions to train their staff and volunteers to identify victims of human trafficking when victims enter one of these facilities. Her legislation was House Bill 416. It passed the Texas House and Senate and was signed into law by Governor Abbott on June 19, 2015.

Rep. Riddle had this to say about her legislative effort, "When I first contemplated filing legislation to require health care facilities that provide abortions to train their staff and volunteers to identify human trafficking victims, I realized we might just be saving two lives instead of one. When an expectant mother is trapped in a life of involuntary servitude how many opportunities does she have to cry out for freedom? My work on the issue of human trafficking has taught me she has very few."

She went on to say, "House Bill 416 will allow a victim of human trafficking to reach out and find help. It will require all abortion facilities to train their staff and volunteers to I.D. trafficking victims."

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) stated how they plan to enforce HB 416.

"The department's rules will allow for enforcement action which will require that facility enter into a corrective action plan to describe how and when the facility will come into compliance and also reference the range of enforcement actions that can be taken in response to the facility's non-compliance and/or its failure to come into compliance. The range of enforcement actions includes administrative penalties, suspension or revocation."

"It is clear," Rep. Riddle said, "the department has the tools and the power to enforce my legislation. This bill will save lives and rescue women trapped in a living hell."