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No. 8

## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. VALADAO).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
January 12, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID G. VALADAO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

### SEX TRAFFICKING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, recently in Sacramento, California, Uber driver Keith Avila picked up three passengers. They were two women and what looked like to him to be a very young girl, about 12 years of age. The ride would be short. The total fare was only \$8.

The young girl, sitting in the front seat with him, was dressed inappropriately in such a short skirt. Here is what he said about her:

You could see all of her legs, and it struck me as odd because she was so very young.

What happened next was even more disturbing to him. One of the women passengers in the vehicle said to the young girl in a controlling, coaching voice:

First thing you do, you ask this question: Do you have any weapons? When you're hugging him, just ask, "Do you have any weapons?" Pat him down. Pat him down while you're hugging on him. Get the money first. Before you start touching him, go in there, get the money first.

Avila, a father himself, knew something was not right about that conversation. The two older women taking a girl inappropriately dressed to a hotel, talking about exchanging money, did not make sense to him.

This had the hallmark of sex trafficking. He later said to police:

I was 100 percent sure I knew what was happening.

So Avila dropped off the three individuals at the Holiday Inn Express and immediately called the police, even though he didn't have to. He alerted them that there was a child sex trafficking occurring right under their noses.

The two alleged women traffickers were later identified as 25-year-old Destiny Pettway and 31-year-old Maria Westley. They now have been charged with pimping and threatening a minor. The buyer, 20-year-old Disney Vang, was also arrested and charged by the police with soliciting a child prostitute.

Mr. Speaker, this girl turned out to be 16 years of age, but her life was saved because of this individual, Mr. Avila.

Elk County Police Officer Chris Trim said it best:

He could've said nothing, went on his way, collected his fare, and then that child victim would have been victimized again by who knows how many different people over the next days, weeks, or even months.

Mr. Speaker, America cannot ignore sex trafficking in this country. Individuals, citizens, no matter who they are, need to be able to recognize what is taking place amongst sex trafficking.

What happened in Sacramento with this child is not an isolated incident. This incident just happened to end well because someone saw something and said something.

Last Congress, we took the historic step of passing several pieces of comprehensive, bipartisan trafficking legislation, supported by most Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

One of those bills was my own and CAROLYN MALONEY's, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. This bill did a number of things, but most importantly, it went after the root problem: the demand, the customer that buys minors on the marketplace of sex trafficking.

The bill did a lot of other things to help promote the enforcement of the sex trafficking laws in America. The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act also went after the trafficker as well as rescuing the victim, and, of course, it prosecuted the buyers.

The bill also set up a fund to pay for grants to help the victims and victim shelters and to educate police. The fund is funded by money that goes into that fund by fees, ordered by Federal judges. In other words, let the criminals pay the rent on the courthouse and pay for the system that they have created and help fund shelters and police training to recognize the trafficking that takes place.

The enforcement of the bill is taking place throughout the country. Going after human sex trafficking is something that this country needs to recognize, and we need to be able to recognize it when we are individuals, law enforcement, and Members of the House of Representatives as well.

Sex trafficking takes place not only on the individual basis, but at big

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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