

Proclamation



Jane Castor, Mayor

WHEREAS, the most recent data from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families shows that there are approximately 190,000 licensed foster homes in the United States, and it is estimated that there are more than 340,000 children in the system, and nearly all foster families strive to provide a safe, stable, and loving home that every child deserves; and

WHEREAS, it is unfortunate that there is a critical shortage of safe, consistent housing and foster care homes, leaving children without the stability and protection they urgently need, and many of these children go missing, making them unprotected and vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking is modern day slavery practiced through forced labor, involuntary servitude, and commercial sexual exploitation, and the victims include citizens, immigrants, men, women and children; and the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA), a federal statute passed into law in 2000 uses the approach of prevention, protection and prosecution to effectively address human trafficking proactively; and

WHEREAS, a concerning statistic reveals that approximately 20,000 foster children go missing each year in the United States, leaving them highly susceptible to exploitation, neglect, and abuse, and it is reported that a large majority of children trafficked in the nation have experienced time in the foster care system; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated there are millions of children around the world in forced labor with approximately half of them involved in its worst forms, and the individuals trafficked and enslaved are deprived of basic freedoms, access to adequate education, healthcare and necessities; and

WHEREAS, organizations across the nation are committed to advocating and raising awareness including **See Us Now (SUN)** a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for the safety, well-being, and the future of foster children throughout the United States, especially those at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking and exploitation; and

WHEREAS, the week of September 21-27, 2025, is named *Missing and Trafficked Foster Children Awareness Week* to bring to light to the community about the need to promote awareness to help end missing and exploited youth in communities everywhere, and to protect our children from harm.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jane Castor, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Tampa, Florida, do hereby proclaim the week of September 21-27, 2025 as

“MISSING AND TRAFFICKED FOSTER CHILDREN AWARENESS WEEK”

in the city of Tampa, Florida and urge all citizens to join as a national and as a global community to provide a safe haven to protect all children from becoming victims and promoting prosecution of the traffickers to the full extent of the law.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 15th day of September, 2025.



Jane Castor

Mayor