

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

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BILL #: [CS/HB 303](#)

TITLE: Human Trafficking Education For Initial Nurse
Licensure

SPONSOR(S): Bartleman

COMPANION BILL: [CS/SB 340](#) (Harrell)

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: None

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 113 Y's

0 N's

GOVERNOR'S ACTION: Approved

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill requires an individual seeking initial licensure as a licensed practical nurse or registered nurse after July 1, 2027, to complete a 2-hour course on human trafficking in order to be eligible for licensure.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill has no fiscal impact on state or local government and a nominal fiscal impact on the private sector.

See Fiscal or Economic Impact.

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

CS/HB 303 passed as CS/SB 340. (Please note that bill section parentheticals do not contain hyperlinks to bill sections for Senate bills).

The bill requires an individual to complete a 2-hour course on [human trafficking](#) to be eligible for initial licensure as a [licensed practical nurse](#) (LPN) or [registered nurse](#) (RN), beginning January 1, 2027.

The course must cover the same components as the [continuing education](#) course on human trafficking that LPNs and RNs must currently complete as a condition for biennial [licensure renewal](#).¹ The course must include:

- Data and information on the types of human trafficking, such as labor and sex, and the extent of human trafficking;
- [Factors](#) that place a person at greater risk of being a victim of human trafficking;
- Public and private social services available for rescue, food, clothing, and shelter referrals;
- [Hotlines](#) for reporting human trafficking which are maintained by the National Human Trafficking Resource Center and the United States Department of Homeland Security;
- [Validated assessment tools](#) for identifying a human trafficking victim and general indicators that a person may be a victim of human trafficking;
- Procedures for sharing information related to human trafficking with a patient; and
- Referral options for legal and social services.

Under the bill, nurses entering the workforce will be required to have completed a course on human trafficking prior to initial licensure, in addition to the requirement in current law that licensed nurses complete the course for each biennial licensure renewal. This ensures that newly licensed nurses will receive basic education on human trafficking two years sooner than required under current law. (Section [1](#)).

¹ See, [s. 464.013\(3\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

STORAGE NAME: h0303z

DATE: 5/26/2026

The bill was approved by the Governor on May 21, 2026, ch. 2026-82, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2026. (Section 2).

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill has a nominal fiscal impact on the private sector. The cost of existing courses that satisfy the requirement range from \$5 to \$20. Continuing education providers may experience a positive fiscal impact for providing the course, while individuals seeking initial nurse licensure may experience a negative fiscal impact.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Nurse Licensure & Regulation

The Division of Medical Quality Assurance (MQA), within the Department of Health (DOH), has general regulatory authority over health care practitioners, including nurses. The Board of Nursing (BON), under the MQA, oversees the licensure and regulation of nursing professions licensed under Part 1 of Chapter 464, F.S. This includes, Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), Registered Nurses (RNs), Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), and Autonomous APRNs.²

There are two primary categories of nurse licensure: professional and practical nurses.

- [Practical nurses](#), or licensed practical nurses (LPNs), perform selected acts, including the administration of treatments and medications, in the care of the ill, injured, or infirm; the promotion of wellness, maintenance of health, and prevention of illness of others under the direction of an authorized health care provider.³
- [Professional nurses](#), often referred to as registered nurses (RNs), perform acts requiring substantial specialized knowledge, judgement, and nursing skill based on applied principles of psychological, biological, physical, and social sciences.⁴ Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) are a subcategory of professional nurses have completed additional education and training in order to be licensed in an advanced nursing practice.⁵

To be eligible for initial licensure as an LPN or RN, an individual must, among other requirements,⁶ have graduated from an approved⁷ prelicensure nursing education program and passed the national licensure examination, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Licensure Exam (NCLEX), for the level of nursing the applicant is seeking to practice.⁸

Continuing Education Requirements

LPNs and RNs must [renew their licenses](#) biennially in order to maintain valid licensure. As a condition for licensure renewal, the BON may require LPNs and RNs complete up to 30 hours of [continuing education](#) (CE) during each 2-

² [S. 464.004, F.S.](#)

³ [S. 464.003\(18\), F.S.](#); LPNs may practice under the direction of a registered nurse, a licensed allopathic physician, a licensed osteopathic physician, a licensed podiatric physician, or a licensed dentist.

⁴ [Ss. 464.003\(19\), F.S., 464.003\(21\), F.S.](#)

⁵ [S. 464.003\(2\), F.S.](#) APRNs may perform advanced nursing and medical acts only to the extent allowed by the written protocol under which they practice, unless the APRN is registered for autonomous practice under [s. 464.0123, F.S.](#)

⁶ Other requirements include, submitting an application and required fees to DOH, pass a background screening, have received a high school diploma or the equivalent, and be able to communicate in the English language. *See*, [s. 464.008, F.S.](#)

⁷ Or a program that the Board has determined to be equivalent to an approved program; *see*, [s. 464.008\(1\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

⁸ [S. 464.008\(1\), F.S.](#)

year licensure cycle.⁹ In addition to general CE requirements, which may be satisfied by courses on a variety of subjects, LPNs and RNs must also complete CE courses on the following specific subjects at varying frequencies:

- Prevention of Medical Errors;¹⁰
- Florida Laws & Rules;¹¹
- Recognizing Impairment in the Workplace;¹²
- Domestic Violence;¹³
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS);¹⁴ and
- Human Trafficking.

The CE course on human trafficking¹⁵ must be two-hours and include:¹⁶

- Data and information on the types of human trafficking, such as labor and sex, and the extent of human trafficking;
- Factors that place a person at greater risk of being a victim of human trafficking;
- Public and private social services available for rescue, food, clothing, and shelter referrals;
- Hotlines for reporting human trafficking which are maintained by the National Human Trafficking Resource Center and the United States Department of Homeland Security;
- Validated assessment tools for identifying a human trafficking victim and general indicators that a person may be a victim of human trafficking;
- Procedures for sharing information related to human trafficking with a patient; and
- Referral options for legal and social services.

Human Trafficking

[Human trafficking](#) is a form of modern-day slavery involving the transporting, soliciting, recruiting, harboring, providing, enticing, maintaining, or obtaining another person for the purpose of exploiting that person.¹⁷ Federal law defines human trafficking as the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person into commercial sex acts, labor, or services against their will. Instances involving a minor induced into commercial sex is considered human trafficking regardless of the presence of force, fraud, or coercion.¹⁸ Cases of human trafficking have been reported in all 50 US states and Washington, D.C.¹⁹ Human trafficking can affect individuals of any age, gender, or nationality; however, some people are more vulnerable than others. Significant [risk factors](#) include recent migration or relocation, substance use, mental health concerns, and involvement in the child welfare system.²⁰

⁹ [S. 464.013\(3\), F.S.](#), and Rule 64B9-5.002, F.A.C., the BON currently requires nurses to complete one hour of CE for each month they were licensed during the licensure cycle. *See also*, Florida Board of Nursing, *Registered Nurse (RN) Renewal*. Available at <https://floridasnursing.gov/registered-nurse-renewal/> (last visited March 17, 2026).

¹⁰ 2-hour course required each biennium; *see*, Rule 64B9-5.002, F.A.C.

¹¹ 2-hour course required each biennium; *see*, Rule 64B9-5.002, F.A.C.

¹² 2-hour course required every other biennium; *see*, Rule 64B9-5.002, F.A.C.

¹³ 2-hour course required every third biennium and the hours are in addition to the 24 hours required for licensure renewal; *see*, Rule 64B9-5.002, F.A.C.

¹⁴ 1-hour course required in the first biennium only; *see*, Rule 64B9-5.002, F.A.C.

¹⁵ As defined by [s. 787.06\(2\)\(d\), F.S.](#), “human trafficking” means the transporting, soliciting, recruiting, harboring, providing, enticing, maintaining, purchasing, patronizing, procuring, or obtaining another person for the purpose of exploitation of that person.

¹⁶ [S. 464.013\(3\)\(c\), F.S.](#); *see*, Rule 64B9-5.002, F.A.C.

¹⁷ [S. 787.06, F.S.](#)

¹⁸ *Id.* *See also*, 22 USC § 7102

¹⁹ Polaris. *2019 data report: the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline*. Available at

<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Polaris-2019-US-National-Human-Trafficking-Hotline-Data-Report.pdf> (last visited March 17, 2026).

²⁰ National Human Trafficking Hotline. *Human Trafficking: What Human Trafficking is, and isn't*. Available at

<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/human-trafficking> (last visited March 17, 2026).

The National Human Trafficking Hotline

The [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) (Hotline) is a free, non-governmental service to connect victims and survivors of sex and labor trafficking with services and supports to find help and safety. The Hotline also receives tips about potential situations of sex and labor trafficking and facilitates reporting that information to the appropriate authorities. The Hotline services are available through toll-free phone and SMS text lines and a live online chat function 24-hours a day, every day of the year.²¹ In 2024, the Hotline identified 11,999 cases²² involving 21,865 victims in the United States.²³ Of these, 832 cases involving 1,874 victims were located in Florida.²⁴

Identifying Victims of Human Trafficking

The cases identified through the Hotline or through criminal investigations are likely only a fraction of the actual instances of human trafficking in the United States. Human trafficking is notoriously underreported and victims are frequently criminalized by law enforcement.²⁵ Victims of human trafficking often do not self-identify as victims, fear retribution from their exploiter, and distrust the authorities.²⁶ The University of South Florida's Trafficking in Persons Risk to Resilience Research Lab estimates that in 2024, there were approximately 200,000 victims of sex trafficking and 540,000 victims of labor trafficking in Florida.²⁷

A public health approach to identifying victims of trafficking recognizes that victims often intersect with multiple systems of care, such as health care settings, through which victims can be identified and provided with assistance.²⁸ Victims of human trafficking often experience significant health consequences as a result of being trafficked, including physical injuries, sexual transmitted infections, and psychological symptoms.²⁹ Consequently, many human trafficking victims come into contact with a health care provider during their exploitation and [screening tools](#) have been developed in order to identify victims in health care settings. The screening tools that have been developed have varying levels of effectiveness and not all of those available have been validated for use in health care settings or with all populations.³⁰ A validated screening tool enables health care practitioners to identify victims and provide appropriate and effective services.³¹

²¹ National Human Trafficking Hotline, *About Us*. Available at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/about-us> (last visited March 17, 2026).

²² The National Human Trafficking Hotline uses the word "case" to represent distinct situations of trafficking reported to the hotline. National Human Trafficking Hotline, *National Statistics (2026)*. Available at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/statistics> (last visited March 17, 2026).

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ National Human Trafficking Hotline, *Florida*. Available at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/statistics/florida> (last visited March 17, 2026).

²⁵ University of South Florida, Trafficking in Persons Risk to Resilience Research Lab, *Statewide Repository for Anonymous Human Trafficking Data: 2024 Annual Report (2025)*. On file with the Health Professions & Programs Subcommittee.

²⁶ Farrell, A., et al., (2019). *Failing victims? Challenges of the police response to human trafficking*. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 18: 649– 673. Available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1745-9133.12456> (last visited March 17, 2026).

²⁷ *Supra*, note 25, at p. 20.

²⁸ Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families (2018). *Adult Human Trafficking Screening Tool and Guide*. Available at https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/otip/adult_human_trafficking_screening_tool_and_guide.pdf (last visited March 17, 2026).

²⁹ Zimmerman, C., et al. (2008). *The Health of Trafficked Women: A Survey of Women Entering Posttrafficking Services in Europe*. *American Journal of Public Health*, 98:1, pp. 55-59. Available at <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2006.108357> (last visited March 17, 2026).

³⁰ Hainaut, M., Thompson, K.J., Ha, C.J., Herzog, H.L., Roberts, T., Ades, V., (2022). *Are Screening Tools for Identifying Human Trafficking Victims in Health Care Settings Validated? A Scoping Review*. *Public Health Reports*, 2022;137(1_suppl):63S-72S. doi:10.1177/00333549211061774

³¹ The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. *Screening, Identification, and Assessment*. Available at <https://www.nctsn.org/what-child-trauma-trauma-types-sex-trafficking/screening-identification-and-assessment> (last visited March 17, 2026); *see also*, The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, (2021). *Trafficking Screening Tools*. Available at <https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/tip-sheet/trafficking-screening-tools.pdf> (last visited March 17, 2026); Chisolm-Straker, M., Singer, E., Strong, D., Loo, G. T., Rothman, E. F., Clesca, C., d'Etienne, J., Alanis, N., & Richardson, L. D. (2021). *Validation of a screening tool for labor and sex trafficking among emergency department patients*. *Journal of the American College of Emergency Physicians* Open, 2(5), e12558. <https://doi.org/10.1002/emp2.12558>