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KENTUCKY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Bill barring human trafficking signed

Ursuline Sisters pushed for SB 43

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The Courier-Journal

FRANKFORT, Ky. -- It was the Ursuline Sisters of Mount St. Joseph who first urged him to take on the issue of human trafficking, Sen. David Boswell recalled.

And yesterday several members of the order -- whose community at Maple Mount is in his district -- joined the Owensboro Democrat to watch as Gov. Ernie Fletcher held a ceremonial signing of Senate Bill 43, which makes it a crime to exploit children or adults for forced labor, domestic work or the sex trade.

"We're thrilled," said Sister Mary Lois Speaks, who stood by as Fletcher signed copies of the bill and handed them to supporters.

Speaks said her order, which also is active in South America and other parts of the world, has become increasingly concerned about people -- especially women and children -- being trafficked between countries.

Advocates of the bill say instances of apparent human trafficking have surfaced in Kentucky, and they believe the law is needed. The federal government and 27 other states already have similar laws, and the U. S. Justice Department is urging all states to adopt them.

SB 43 also is supported by the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, the Kentucky Office of Legal Services and the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association.

Fletcher said yesterday that he was pleased to sign the measure.

"Obviously, this is a great bill," he said.

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