



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the City of Poquoson, Virginia is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all individuals who live in or visit our community; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking is both a crime and a public health issue that exploits the most vulnerable, undermining the well-being of individuals, families, and communities across generations; and

WHEREAS, more than two decades after the enactment of the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act*, human trafficking persists, including the use of force, fraud, or coercion to recruit, harbor, or transport individuals for purposes of labor or commercial sex; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 27.6 million people are currently subjected to human trafficking worldwide, with cases reported in every U.S. state and territory; and

WHEREAS, while anyone can be a victim of trafficking, certain populations—such as those experiencing abuse, poverty, homelessness, discrimination, or social isolation—are at elevated risk; and

WHEREAS, trafficking occurs both in person and online, and in a variety of industries, including domestic work, restaurants, construction, agriculture, and manufacturing. Victims may be exploited by strangers, employers, partners, or even family members; and

WHEREAS, prevention efforts must focus on building individual, community, and societal resilience by addressing root causes such as inequality, social disconnection, and economic vulnerability; and

WHEREAS, combating human trafficking requires a coordinated, community-wide response involving law enforcement, service providers, government, and the public; and

WHEREAS, survivors of trafficking bring critical insight and expertise, and the City of Poquoson is committed to partnering with them to inform and strengthen services and prevention programs; and

WHEREAS, every individual, family, and organization can contribute to raising awareness, preventing exploitation, and supporting survivors by learning more at ACF.hhs.gov/otip and humantraffickinghotline.org; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that the Poquoson City Council declares the month of January 2026 as Human Trafficking Prevention Month, reaffirming our commitment to increase awareness and education on human trafficking, make resources available to assist individuals and communities impacted by human trafficking, and build diverse public-private partnerships to support a more comprehensive response to prevent and respond to human trafficking.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hand and caused the Seal of the City of Poquoson, Virginia to be affixed this twelfth day of January, Two Thousand and Twenty-six.

David A. Hux, Mayor

Debbie Bunting, Vice Mayor

Carey L. Freeman

Charles M. Southall, III

Keith Feigh

Anjie Emmett

Jeanne Darby Hubbard