

March 19, 2021

ATTORNEY GENERAL KWAME RAOUL APPLAUDS COMMITTEE PASSAGE OF BILL TO EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul applauded committee passage of his legislation to expand and strengthen Illinois' Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) to include protections for survivors of human trafficking. The ACP is administered by the Attorney General's office and currently provides survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, and members of their households, with a substitute address to use as home, school and work addresses.

Senate Bill 593, which passed out of the Senate Human Rights Committee, was initiated by Raoul and sponsored by Sen. Suzy Glowiak Hilton to allow survivors of human trafficking to apply for the protections the ACP provides. The legislation also strengthens protections for all participants by preventing participants' addresses and phone numbers from being disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act, ensuring participants can obtain a Real ID driver's license using the program's substituted address, and clarifying the process for participants to register to vote. The legislation passed unanimously and will move to the full Senate. Similar language is also included in House Bill 625, sponsored by Rep. Jeff Keicher and Rep. Terra Costa Howard, which unanimously passed out of the House Judiciary Criminal Law Committee earlier this week and will move to the full House.

"For survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, the Address Confidentiality Program can help provide peace of mind, and this legislation will provide that same protection to survivors of human trafficking," Raoul said. "Abusers can be incredibly manipulative and committed to finding survivors, and the provisions in the legislation recognize this and add layers of protection to prevent this from happening. I appreciate the support from the Senate and House committees and encourage full passage of this important measure."

"Survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking deserve to feel safe in their communities," Glowiak Hilton said. "This legislation gives survivors that measure of comfort and security and ensures that they are protected from their abusers."

"Survivors of human trafficking deserve to have the same protections afforded to others in the Address Confidentiality Program," Keicher said. "I am proud to sponsor this measure that will give survivors some measure of security to allow them to continue to heal without fear of their abusers finding them."

"The address confidentiality program is a powerful tool to protect survivors from harassment and retribution," Costa Howard said. "This new law will help Illinois survivors feel less vulnerable at home, at work, and at school, and I'm very proud to work alongside the Attorney General and my fellow sponsors to increase protections for people who are rebuilding their lives after being victims of trafficking."

Currently, survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking who fear for their safety are eligible to apply for the ACP. Additionally, parents or guardians can apply on behalf of minors and people with disabilities if there is good reason to believe that those individuals are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, and fear for their safety. Other members of the participant's household should also participate in the program in order to best protect the address. An applicant is not required to report the violence or threat of violence to law enforcement in order to be eligible for the ACP.

Survivors can apply for the ACP through the Attorney General's office in order to receive a substitute address that can be used to create or update public records for personal use. Additionally, the ACP functions as a mail-forwarding system for all first-class mail. Raoul cautions that, while the ACP is not a witness protection program that can assist with relocation or a change of identity, it can be a valuable addition to a comprehensive safety plan. Enrollment lasts for a period of four years, and participants can renew their enrollment at the end of the period. Participants are free to voluntarily withdraw from the ACP at any time.

Applying to participate in the ACP is free of charge, and the Attorney General's office is prohibited from disclosing a participant's address unless the office receives a request from law enforcement or a court order requiring disclosure to a specific individual.

Participating in the ACP alone will not adequately protect against violence. The Attorney General urges survivors to work with an advocate to develop a comprehensive safety plan. To locate an advocate, please contact the Illinois Domestic Violence hotline at (877) 863-6338 or visit <https://icasa.org/crisis-centers> to locate a Rape Crisis Center in your area.

For more information about the Address Confidentiality Program, please visit the [Attorney General's website](#), or call 1-844-916-0295 or 1-877-398-1130 (TTY).