



# *Proclamation*

**WHEREAS,** Valley Crisis Center assisted and identified over 19 victims of human trafficking from our local communities, knowing there are many more unreported; and

**WHEREAS,** advocates provide resources to empower self-sufficiency, restore dignity, and support recovery from trauma for survivors; and

**WHEREAS,** the International Labor Organization recognizes there are an estimated 40.3 million people in modern slavery globally where one in four victims are children; and

**WHEREAS,** National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimates one out of six endangered runaways are likely child sex trafficking victims; and

**WHEREAS,** the U.S. Department of Labor identified 155 goods from 77 countries made by forced and child labor; and

**WHEREAS,** The City of Merced recognizes the need for greater awareness and accountability in regard to modern-day slavery; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, MATTHEW SERRATTO, Mayor** of the City of Merced, on behalf of the City Council hereby proclaim the month of January as "National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month" and urge all citizens to educate themselves about all forms of modern slavery and the signs and consequences of human trafficking. Together we can continue to support efforts related to human trafficking prevention, support survivor assistance programs, and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

Signed this 21<sup>st</sup> day of January 2025.

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*Matthew Serratto, Mayor of Merced*