



March 22, 2013

**HOUSE LAWMAKERS UNANIMOUSLY PASS BILL TO AID HUMAN
TRAFFICKING VICTIMS**

Springfield — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today applauded House lawmakers for their unanimous support of legislation to assist victims of human trafficking who have been branded by their offenders. House members voted 108-0 today to send House Bill 2640 to the Senate.

Criminal offenders who engage in human trafficking subject their victims to horrific abuse. Increasingly these offenders have been known to forcefully tattoo their victims so that the tattoo can serve as brand and sign of ownership, and the tattoos can include bar codes or a trafficker's nick name.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Kelly Burke and crafted in conjunction with Madigan's office, will allow victims of human trafficking who have been branded by their trafficker to be reimbursed for the cost of removing the branding through the Illinois Crime Victims Compensation Fund, which was implemented to help reduce the financial burden imposed on victims of violent crime and their families. This will help victims to have the tattoos removed and recover from the crime.

"This legislation will aid human trafficking victims who are subject to often horrific victimization and involuntary servitude," Madigan said. "Removal of branding is not only a painful experience but a costly one, and it is considered a vital part of a victim's psychological and emotional healing."

The bill will add branding to the list of expenses for which a crime victim may be compensated under the Illinois Crime Victims Compensation Act. It requires the victim seek removal of the branding with an authorized or licensed tattoo remover.

"Victims of human trafficking have endured unimaginable trials, and they cannot truly break free if they still bear the physical reminders of such a painful experience," Rep. Burke said. "Helping to remove the tattoos that were forced on them and literally branded them as property is essential to helping these individuals live with the freedom and dignity they deserve."

-30-

[Return to March 2013 Press Releases](#)

