

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY**

BILL NO. H1917

TITLE: An Act to ensure fair access to compensation for victims of human trafficking and forced labor.

SPONSOR: Rep. Tram T. Nguyen

CO-SPONSOR(S): Sen. Lydia Edwards Rep. Mark C. Montigny
Rep. Patrick J. Kearney Rep. Steven J. Ouellette

HEARING DATE: June 17, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY: H1706 (2023-2024)

SENATE BILL: S1186 (Montigny)

CURRENT LAW: Section 1 of Chapter 149 of the General Laws defines terms for the chapter which establishes the rules and procedures for labor and industries in the Commonwealth.

Section 3 of Chapter 258C states that the maximum award for compensation of victims of violent crimes under the chapter is \$25,000 unless the claimant has a catastrophic injury where the maximum amount is \$50,000. The section outlines the proof required for claiming losses including: (i) funeral, burial or internment expenses; (ii) out-of-pocket medical expenses; (iii) mental health counseling; and (iv) loss of actual earnings.

BILL SUMMARY: Section 1 – Adds to Section 1 of Chapter 149 a definition for “victim of human trafficking” which provides that it is a person subjected to conduct prohibited by Sections 50 or 51 of Chapter 265 or a victim of “severe forms of trafficking in persons” under 22 U.S.C. 7102.

Section 2 – Adds a new Section 204 to Chapter 149 making victims of human trafficking eligible for compensation up to \$25,000 from the division of victim compensation and assistance within the department of the attorney general for lost income resulting from their deprivation of liberty. Victims will be eligible for this compensation even if they lack any official employment documentation or have a criminal history or alleged contributory conduct resulting from victimization.

Section 3 – Adds to Section 3 of Chapter 258C language permitting evidence other than official employment documentation to be considered when compensating a victim of human trafficking for

lost income. This compensation may be the result of a deprivation of liberty during the crime and will be calculated based on Massachusetts minimum wage at the time of the trafficking conduct.

Section 4 – Adds to Section 3 of Chapter 258C language giving the division of victim compensation and assistance permission to authorize cash payments for job retaining or similar employment-oriented services to compensate a victim of human trafficking for lost income which may include compensation: (i) for lost income directly resulting from the injury for up to 7 years following the date of the crime unless the injury rendered the victim disabled; (ii) to a minor victim if eligible to receive compensation upon reaching 18 years of age; or (iii) to the parent or legal guardian of a minor victim who died or is hospitalized as a result of the crime.