Legislation Text

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Calling upon the United Nations, the President of the United States and other international leaders to strongly condemn the Libyan slave trade and promptly take the actions necessary to end this grave injustice to human dignity.

WHEREAS, A recent video of men being sold at a slave auction in Libya has sparked international outrage and has put a spotlight on the exploitation of migrant populations not only in Libya but all over the world. The undercover video, filmed by CNN reporters, showed smugglers selling off a dozen men for $400 each; and

WHEREAS, Since the ousting of Libya's longtime leader, Muammar Gaddafi, in 2011, Libya has been in a state of unrest. The transitional government was unsuccessful in taking control of the country, which led to the division of the population into several factions of militias, and civil war; and

WHEREAS, Tackling the Libyan slave trade will require international assistance. Libya is an especially opportune place for slave traders as many migrants and refugees pass through Libya with hopes of crossing over to Europe from Africa; and

WHEREAS, The International Organization for Migration, the United Nation's (U.N.) migration agency, said that they had reports of "slave markets" along the migrant routes in North Africa; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of thousands of migrants have crossed the Mediterranean at significant risk to themselves and their families. Thousands have died while attempting the journey. Recently, the European Union has cracked down on boats smuggling refugees from Africa, resulting in at least 400,000 migrants being bottled up in Libyan detention camps, creating an environment ripe for extortion; and

WHEREAS, The leaders of Libya, France, German, Chad, Niger and other countries agreed on a plan to evacuate thousands of migrants in Libyan detention camps; and

WHEREAS, The U.N. Security Council held an emergency meeting and said it would be "stepping up its work" to address this issue. However, the U.N. refugee agency is underfunded, and additional funds are especially needed for its operations in sub-Saharan Africa; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. expressed "To see the pictures of these men being treated like cattle, and to hear the auctioneer describe them as, quote, 'big strong boys for farm work,' should shock the conscience of us all. There are few greater violations of human rights and human dignity than this"; and

WHEREAS, In a statement, the U.N. has called for "urgent actions to end Libya's trade in enslaved people." They further stated that, "It is now clear that slavery is an outrageous reality in Libya. The auctions are reminiscent of one of the darkest chapters in human history, when millions of Africans were uprooted, enslaved, trafficked and auctioned to the highest bidder"; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Affairs, the African, Caribbean Business

Council for Greater Philadelphia, ACANA, Echos of Africa, UNESCO -- Center for Global Education and the Urban Resources and Opportunity Center all endorse the content of this resolution and are anxious to see further action be taken by Global leaders; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Calls upon the United Nations, the President of the United States and other international leaders to strongly condemn the Libyan slave trade and promptly take the actions necessary to end this grave injustice to human dignity.

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