Rod Blagojevich signed a law that provides more legal tools for State prosecutors and more protections for trafficking victims.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 will help combat human trafficking throughout the Nation and around the globe. It extends the provisions given to Federal law enforcement in 2000 to prosecute traffickers, protect victims, and prevent future abuses.

And it will allow our government to continue holding other nations accountable for their efforts to combat human trafficking abroad. I have discussed this issue with Ambassador John Miller, a former member of Congress who is now the director of the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. I am pleased that the number of countries to whom the State Department has given a failing grade—so-called ''Tier 3'' countries—has dropped from 27 in 2001 to 14 in 2005.

Earlier this month, we commemorated the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. On this occasion, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said:

> The world is now wrestling with a new form of slavery—trafficking in human beings, in which many vulnerable people are virtually abandoned by legal and social systems into a sordid realm of exploitation and abuse. People who perpetrate, condone or facilitate slavery or slavery-like practices must be held accountable by national and, if necessary, international means. The international community must also do more to combat poverty, social exclusion, illiteracy, ignorance and discrimination, which increase vulnerability and are part of the underlying context for this scourge.

By passing the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005, we are heeding the advice of Kofi Annan and carrying the torch of Paul Wellstone.

Mrs. CLINTON. I rise today to speak in support of the reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

The scourge of trafficking in women and children was a priority for me as First Lady and continues to be a priority for me as a U.S. Senator. Since the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, I have been working to raise awareness of the heinous practice of buying and selling women and children like commodities. I have seen the devastation that it causes, and the lives it ruins. I have met with the families from Eastern and Central Europe, who, with tears in their eyes, pleaded with me to help them find lost ones who had been stolen from them, and I have met with the victims, including a 12-year-old girl in Thailand who was dying of AIDS after being sold twice by her family. This barbaric practice has caused far too many to exist in a perpetual state of fear and vulnerability, and we must do everything in our power to bring the scourge of trafficking out of the shadows and to the attention of the world.

I am proud to say that the United States has, for the past decade, been the leader in trying to persuade the rest of the world to eradicate this abhorrent practice. As the Clinton administration increased the anti-trafficking activities of our Government through programs at the State Department and the Department of Justice, Congress was developing legislation to eradicate trafficking. We worked with the late Senator Wellstone, his Republican cosponsor, Senator BROWNBACK, and Congressman CHRIS SMITH and former Congressman Sam Gejdenson in the House, to introduce the first comprehensive anti-trafficking bill in Congress. This culminated in the passage of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. I believed then, and I believe now, that this is one of the Clinton administration's greatest achievements and one of the most important parts of Senator Wellstone's legacy. That law has meant the difference between freedom and enslavement for unknown numbers of potential trafficking victims, and this reauthorization provides us with the opportunity to strengthen its ability to help those who have been trafficked, and I would like to thank Senator BROWNBACK and Representative SMITH, my colleagues on the Helsinki Commission, for their continued commitment to this act since its initial passage.

I am proud to see that this reauthorization enhances the 3 P's strategy—prevention of trafficking, prosecution of those that engage in these acts, and protection of the vulnerable individuals who have been trafficked—that we developed in the Clinton administration. It gives the Justice Department the authority to pursue extraterritorial prosecutions of Federal employees or those accompanying them if they engage in trafficking activities. It encourages the prevention of trafficking by requiring organizations or contractors engaged in U.S.-supported peacekeeping efforts to have antitrafficking policies in place. And it will protect those who have been trafficked overseas by increasing funding for programs like residential treatment facilities.

But there is still so much work to be done. Although reliable statistics are difficult to find, we know that 800,000 individuals—the vast majority of whom are women and children—are trafficked from one country to another every year, with 15,000 being trafficked to the United States. The FBI estimates that trafficking generates $9.5 billion annually for organized crime syndicates around the world.

I am deeply concerned about the growing domestic commercial sex trade, and I believe that we need to increase funding and target efforts to end all forms of exploitation. Any expansion of our focus must not dilute our commitment to eradicating human trafficking in all its forms in the United States, nor detract from the progress we have made in increasing prosecutions and working with law enforcement agencies. We must ensure that our Government has all the resources it needs to make inroads against these awful acts on our own soil.

In the fight against trafficking in persons, patience simply is not an option. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to end this barbaric practice in both the United States and around the world, because this is not about politics, but about what we all share: universal freedom and universal human rights.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 972) was read the third time and passed.

TO AMEND THE EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY ACT OF 1974

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4579, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

> A bill (H.R. 4579) to amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend by one year provisions requiring parity in the application of certain limits to mental health benefits.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 4579) was read the third time and passed.

TORTURE VICTIMS RELIEF REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2005

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2017, which was received from House.

The clerk will state the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

> A bill (H.R. 2017) to amend the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998 to authorize appropriations to provide assistance for domestic and foreign programs and centers for the treatment of victims of torture, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the