



**New Zealand House of Representatives**  
Te Whare Māngai o Aotearoa

**Justice Committee**

Komiti Whiriwhiri Take Ture

54th Parliament

August 2025

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**Crimes (Increased Penalties for Slavery  
Offences) Amendment Bill**

36—1

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## **Contents**

Recommendation.....	3
About the bill as introduced.....	3
Reason for recommending that the bill not proceed.....	3
Appendix.....	4

# Crimes (Increased Penalties for Slavery Offences) Amendment Bill

## Recommendation

The Justice Committee has examined the Crimes (Increased Penalties for Slavery Offences) Amendment Bill and recommends that this bill not proceed.

## About the bill as introduced

The Crimes (Increased Penalties for Slavery Offences) Amendment Bill is a Member's bill in the name of Greg Fleming MP. It would amend sections 98 and 98AA of the Crimes Act 1961 which, respectively, set out the offences related to dealing in slaves and dealing in people under 18 for sexual exploitation, removal of body parts, or engagement in forced labour. The penalty for each offence is imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years.

The bill would increase the penalties in sections 98 and 98AA to match the penalty for the offence of trafficking in persons (section 98D of the Act). That penalty is imprisonment for a term not exceeding 20 years, a fine not exceeding \$500,000, or both. The bill's explanatory note states that this would achieve a cohesive penalty regime that is a step forward to achieving New Zealand's hard stance against human trafficking.

## Reason for recommending that the bill not proceed

On 13 August 2025, the Government announced that it intends to strengthen trafficking and smuggling laws by amending the Crimes Act to:<sup>1</sup>

- remove the requirement to prove that coercion or deception occurred when the trafficked victim is under 18
- make it explicit that consent is irrelevant when the victim is under 18 or when coercion or deception was present
- ensure that migrants cannot be smuggled into New Zealand using authentic but fraudulently obtained travel documents.
- provide greater protection for undercover police investigating cases of child exploitation.

The member in charge of the bill has indicated that the proposed amendments would effectively make his bill redundant. He asked us to report his bill back to the House as soon as practicable as he intends to withdraw it when it is returned to the House.

<sup>1</sup> [Strengthening trafficking and smuggling laws | Beehive.govt.nz.](#)

## Appendix

### Committee procedure

The Crimes (Increased Penalties for Slavery Offences) Amendment Bill was referred to the committee on 17 December 2024. The closing date for submissions was 13 February 2025. We received and considered submissions from 104 interested groups and individuals. We heard oral evidence from 12 submitters at hearings by videoconference and in Wellington.

We received advice on the bill from the Ministry of Justice. The Office of the Clerk provided advice on the bill's legislative quality. The Parliamentary Counsel Office was available to assist with legal drafting.

### Committee members

Hon Andrew Bayly (member from 9 April and Chairperson from 10 April 2025)

Hon James Meager (member and Chairperson until 9 April 2025)

Hon Ginny Andersen

Jamie Arbuckle

Carl Bates (from 29 January 2025)

Cameron Brewer (until 29 January 2025)

Tākuta Ferris

Paulo Garcia (until 29 January 2025)

Dr Tracey McLellan (until 14 May 2025)

Rima Nakhle

Tamatha Paul (until 29 January 2025)

Tom Rutherford (from 29 January 2025)

Todd Stephenson

Vanushi Walters (from 14 May 2025)

Hon Dr Duncan Webb

Dr Lawrence Xu-Nan (from 29 January 2025)

### Related resources

The documents that we received as advice and evidence are available on the [Parliament website](#).