



Alliance to End Slavery and
Trafficking
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July 28, 2014

Undersecretary Sarah Sewall
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Undersecretary Sewall:

On behalf of the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST), we are writing to express our strong support for the legislation that would upgrade the Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP) to a Bureau. The upgrade would establish the issue of combating trafficking in persons and forced labor as a foreign policy priority for this Administration. The update would also place the TIP Office on equal footing with Regional and other functional Bureaus in the State Department to promote diplomatic engagement on human trafficking eradication and to preserve the integrity and impartiality of the tier rankings in the annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report.

The J/TIP Office, created under the auspices of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, has proven to be the U.S. Government's experts on trafficking in persons. Most notably, its annual TIP Report is a powerful tool in the global campaign to end slavery. The tier ranking process outlined in the report has been effective in encouraging governments to address specific gaps in their responses to trafficking. It is an important tool for acknowledging improvement, as well.

Nonetheless, anti-human trafficking advocacy groups, former directors of the J/TIP Office, and the President's Advisory Council have expressed concerns that the J/TIP Office lacks the stature to effectively advocate on behalf of anti-human trafficking initiatives. As a result, they have recommended this upgrade in order to increase the J/TIP Office's ability to lead the global effort to end modern slavery. This upgrade also has strong Congressional support. The House of Representatives recently passed legislation supporting a TIP Bureau, and the corresponding bill in the Senate has co-sponsorship from over 30 offices. This simple re-designation, which does not involve additional bureaucracy or expense, will go a long way to securing the attention that eradication of human trafficking requires.

The members of ATEST have seen the tremendous impact that effective diplomacy and accurate tier ranking can have to encourage countries to increase their efforts to combat sex and labor trafficking. We respectfully ask that you support the elevation of the J/TIP Office to a Bureau to ensure that (1) human trafficking eradication remains properly represented in the United States'

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foreign policy and diplomacy, and (2) the United States' anti-trafficking experts have the stature within the State Department bureaucracy that they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Melysa Sperber, ATEST Director, at msperber@humanityunited.org or (631) 374-0749.

Sincerely,

Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST)

Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)

ECPAT-USA

Free the Slaves

International Justice Mission

Polaris

Safe Horizon

Solidarity Center

Vital Voices Global Partnership

World Vision

ATEST is a diverse alliance of U.S.-based human rights organizations, acting with a shared agenda to end all forms of modern-day slavery and human trafficking domestically and globally. ATEST member organizations include: Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST), Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), ECPAT-USA, Free the Slaves, International Justice Mission, Polaris, Safe Horizon, Solidarity Center, Verité, Vital Voices Global Partnership, and World Vision.