



Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking  
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[www.endslaveryandtrafficking.org](http://www.endslaveryandtrafficking.org)

January 11, 2012

Senator Harry Reid  
Senate Majority Leader  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Representative John Boehner  
Speaker of the House  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Nancy Pelosi  
House Minority Leader  
H-204, US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Boehner, Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST), a national coalition of anti-human trafficking groups, I write to you today to express our serious concern with the failure of Congress to reauthorize the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 prior to the statute's expiration on September 30, 2011. The programs authorized by the TVPA, which are crucial to the work to end modern-day slavery and human trafficking in the United States and around the world, are jeopardized by Congress's inaction. We urge you to act now to put partisan differences aside in the interest of the protection of trafficking survivors.

The TVPA, first signed into law in 2000, has been successfully renewed three times by overwhelming bipartisan majorities. However, it now appears that Congress is setting aside the reauthorization of numerous programs it agrees are effective in combating human trafficking and protecting survivors because of a debate concerning methods used by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to award grants for services. This debate has effectively stalled reauthorization efforts for the first time since the inception of the law. That is not an outcome that is in the interest of preventing trafficking, protecting survivors, or punishing traffickers.

The House version of the TVPA reauthorization bill was first introduced in August 2011 (H.R. 2830), garnering 44 bipartisan co-sponsors, and was favorably voted out of the Foreign Affairs Committee in October. The Senate version was introduced in June 2011 (S. 1301), garnering 32 bipartisan co-sponsors, and was voted favorably out of the Judiciary committee in October. However, in response to concerns regarding HHS's grant-making methods, the House bill's original sponsor introduced a new version of the reauthorization bill in December (H.R. 3589). We understand that members from both parties and chambers have vowed not to pass any of the

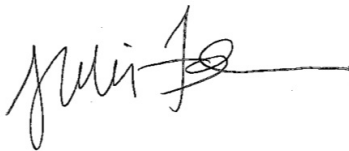
competing bills. This situation jeopardizes Congress's legacy of collaboration on the critical effort to end modern-day slavery.

For well over a decade, the work to combat modern-day slavery and human trafficking has been an example of Congress's ability to put partisanship aside in the interest of tackling a difficult and seemingly intractable problem. That willingness to be thoughtful, practical, and balanced in approach has proven successful in this work, and made tremendous contributions to the fight against this heinous crime. Unfortunately, these recent political developments jeopardize this pragmatic balance in favor of a partisan confrontation that undermines the achievement of our joint goal of ending modern-day slavery in the United States and around the world.

Therefore, for the reasons outlined above, and on behalf of ATEST, I urge you, as we honor National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, to put partisan politics aside and reauthorize the TVPA in order to continue the critical support for programs that prevent human trafficking, enhance the prosecution of perpetrators, and protect and serve the needs of survivors.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call me at (202) 503-3219, or Cory Smith, ATEST Senior Policy Advisor, at (202) 361-1442.

Sincerely,



Julie Fernandes  
Director  
Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking

cc: Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
Senator Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Representative Howard Berman, Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Representative Chris Smith, Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee

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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, Not For Sale Campaign, Polaris Project, Safe Horizon, Solidarity Center, Verité, Vital Voices Global Partnership, World Vision, and one individual member, Julia Ormond, former U.N. Goodwill Ambassador and president and founder of the Alliance to Stop Slavery and End Trafficking (ASSET).

