



Alliance to End Slavery and
Trafficking
1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 520
Washington, DC 20006
www.endslaveryandtrafficking.org

March 2, 2015

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart, Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

The Honorable David Price, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies

The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart / Chairwoman Collins and Ranking Members Price and Reed:

On behalf of the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) and the undersigned organizations, we are writing to urge you to fund important programs to combat human trafficking and forced labor in the FY 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Appropriations bill and include report language to further assist in anti-trafficking efforts.

1. Homeless Assistance Grants: Continuums of Care (CoC) For Youth

Within the Homeless Assistance Grants program, we request \$150,000,000 be set aside for Continuums of Care (CoC) for homeless youth, inclusive of both minors and young adults as authorized under Title IV, Subtitle C, section 422 of the McKinney-Vento Act.

Proposed Bill Language:

Provided, that not less than \$150,000,000 of the funds appropriated under this heading shall be made available for Continuums of Care (CoC) as authorized by Title IV, Subtitle C, section 422 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act for homeless youth, including both minors and youth ages 18 to 24.

Transitional housing, emergency shelter, and other emergency solutions programs are integral parts to prevent trafficking among the homeless youth population because a lack of housing increases vulnerability and strengthens a young person's risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking. Currently, HUD has been deprioritizing housing and shelter programs with supportive services in exchange for prioritizing other housing interventions that are largely not youth-appropriate or accessible to homeless youth. Having a stable place to live coupled with services

that reconnect youth with education while also teaching life skills is necessary for youth to be able to fully support themselves when they become adults. Programs with a youth appropriate focus are the most effective way to prevent the human trafficking of youth experiencing homelessness. Without these programs and their resources available to youth, they are more likely to fall victim to trafficking.

2. Homeless Assistance Grants: Screening Requirement

We are requesting a change to HUD policy that addresses the verification process, which determines eligibility to HUD homelessness assistance programs. Many homeless families and youth encounter people outside of the HUD homelessness assistance system who are able to verify that a person is either homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. These programs should be able to verify their homelessness status and refer them to HUD. Adding this clarity to the regulations clarifying the implementation of the HEARTH Act would enable the vulnerable and often invisible homeless youth to access much needed housing and services to these youth who are at a very high risk of falling victim to human trafficking and currently find it difficult to access HUD homelessness assistance.

The staff of RHYA, HCH, and EHCY programs often encounters the invisible homeless youth and families. Some homeless youth may already be in trafficking situations and are too fearful to tell an intake worker upon first meeting them. Persons other than intake workers may have already identified homeless and trafficked youth, such as RHYA street outreach workers, EHCY school personnel, or HCH program staff. Staff of these programs is tasked with building relationships with this highly vulnerable youth population and often know more about their day-to-day lives and history than would be disclosed to an intake worker.

Proposed Report Language:

The Committee directs the Office of Community Planning and Development to include a determination of imminent risk of homelessness as a requirement during the screening and interviewing process for at risk youth and refer them to the appropriate housing and counseling programs.

We understand the extremely difficult funding situation you are facing in FY 2016 and, as a group of leading NGOs, we have collectively carefully vetted our requests to reflect true priorities that are targeted and focused on the most important and most effective programs in the Housing and Urban Development Department related to human trafficking. We thank you for your consideration of these requests and your continued leadership in fighting the scourge of human trafficking, forced labor, and modern slavery. 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

Futures Without Violence (FUTURES)

International Justice Mission

National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA)

National Network for Youth (NN4Y)

Polaris

Safe Horizon

Solidarity Center

Verité

Vital Voices Global Partnership

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, Futures Without Violence (FUTURES), International Justice Mission, National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA), National Network for Youth (NN4Y), Polaris, Safe Horizon, Solidarity Center, Verité, Vital Voices Global Partnership, and World Vision.