



Alliance to End Slavery and
Trafficking
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March 26, 2014

Senator Tom Harkin, Chairman
Senator Lamar Alexander, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Alexander:

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to express our strong support for the “Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking of 2013” (S.1823) as introduced by Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Senator Kay Hagan (D-NC). We urge you to co-sponsor and pass S.1823, a critical piece of legislation needed to ensure that child victims of human trafficking for both commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in the United States are properly identified by state child welfare agencies and receive the services they need. The bill has no direct cost.

Children in the child welfare system are among the most vulnerable to human trafficking. Recent reports have shown that the majority of identified child trafficking victims already had contact, often multiple times, with the child welfare system. To ensure the proper identification of and assistance for these children, this bill amends the Social Security Act to require state child welfare agencies under the Act to report in their annual plans on current efforts to address the human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children in their care, or alternatively to report on their future plans to address the issue.

Additionally, the bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop and publish guidelines to assist child welfare agencies in serving victims of trafficking and youth at-risk of becoming victims. These recommendations would provide guidance on service delivery strategies, training materials, protocols for cross-system collaboration, best practices to identify residential placements, and on documentation and data collection. HHS is required under the bill to submit a report to Congress outlining the prevalence of trafficking among the foster youth population, identifying trends related to both sex and labor trafficking, evaluating the feasibility of collecting annual or semi-annual data from agencies, and proposing an ongoing method of supporting and monitoring efforts of local child welfare agencies to prevent and respond to human trafficking.

The bill reflects the gap in data on human trafficking by requiring child welfare agencies to disclose: (1) reasonable efforts to document child victims of sex or labor trafficking in

the care of the agency; and, (2) missing, abducted, or trafficked youth for the National Crime Information Center database.

Given this support, states will be better able to marshal existing resources to better protect and serve all child trafficking victims. To date, few child welfare professionals have been adequately trained to respond to child victims of trafficking, provide appropriate case management for this population, and prevent vulnerable foster youth from becoming victims. This bill addresses these concerns and builds the infrastructure to respond to child victims of human trafficking.

S.1823 is an important step in creating the appropriate safety net we need to end child trafficking in the United States. We urge you to support this life-saving legislation now. If you have any questions, please contact Melysa Sperber, ATEST Director, at msperber@humanityunited.org or (631) 374-0749.

Sincerely,

Break the Chain Campaign

Businesses Ending Slavery & Trafficking (BEST)

Catholic Health Partners

Center for the Human Rights of Children
Loyola University Chicago

Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition Board of Directors

Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST)

Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)

DCCHcenter.org

ECPAT-USA

Faith Alliance of Brevard

Franciscan Friars (OFM), St. John the Baptist Province, JPIC Office

Free the Slaves

Ginger Thoennes

Girls Educational and Mentoring Services

ICCR Human Trafficking Leadership Group

Merikay Jost
Idaho Against Human Trafficking

International Justice Mission

The International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA)

Jewish Labor Committee Western Region

Mercy Investment Services, Inc

Murfmovie

National Domestic Workers Alliance

New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

NOOWA! (Not On Our Watch Advocacy!)

Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment

Pike Youth Group

Polaris Project

Provincial Council, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province

Region VI Coalition for Responsible Investment

Religious Sisters of Charity

Safe Horizon

Linda Smith (U.S. Congress 1995-99)
Founder and President
Shared Hope International

Sisters of Charity of Nazareth -Central and western Province Leadership Teams

Sisters of the Holy Cross - Congregation Justice Committee

Society of the Holy Child Jesus

St. Joseph Health System

T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

The College at Brockport

Dr. Katariina Rosenblatt
There Is HOPE For Me, Inc.

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

U.S. Fund for UNICEF

Elizabeth Keyes, Director
Immigrant Rights Clinic
University of Baltimore School of Law*
*Institution listed for identification purposes only

Leigh Goodmark, Visiting Professor of Law
University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law*
*Institution listed for identification purposes only

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, International Justice Mission, Polaris Project, Safe Horizon, Solidarity Center, Verité, Vital Voices Global Partnership, and World Vision.