

ATEST NATIONAL CALL ON CHILD WELFARE

04/25/2013 –2:00 PM ET

Conference ID # CR337487

*Please note that Arkadin Conferencing Services produced this written transcript after the conclusion of the ATEST National Call on Child Welfare.

Larissa: Welcome to the ATEST National Call on Child Welfare. My name is Larissa and I'll be your operator for today's call. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. Later we'll conduct a question and answer session. Please note that this conference is being recorded and I'd like to turn the call over to Cory Smith. Sir, you may begin.

Mr. Cory Smith: Thank you so much operator. Thank you to everyone for taking the time to join the ATEST National Call on Child Welfare today. As the operator said, we'll have a number of speakers. You'll be in listen-only mode. At the end of the presentations, we will open up the line for Q&A's. The operator will prompt you to get in the queue to ask questions and we will have plenty of time for questions and answers at the end of the call. I'm Cory Smith. I'm Senior Policy Advisor to Humanity United and the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking. And ATEST is a coalition of US based human rights organizations working to end modern day slavery and human trafficking in the US and around the world. We advocate for lasting solutions to prevent labor and sex trafficking, hold perpetrators accountable, insure justice for victims and empower survivors with tools for recovery. ATEST works on all facets of human trafficking, adults and children for national US citizens, domestic, international labor and sex trafficking. And just want to remind folks that this call will be recorded. So there will be an opportunity to hear in MP3. There'll be a link that will be sent out by email and posted on the ATEST website if you are unable to hear all the call or if you have colleagues, partners that want to hear and listen to what was discussed on today's call. And the ATEST website is endslaveryandtrafficking.org. That's e-n-d slaveryandtrafficking.o-r-g. So I am going to go ahead and turn the call over to our first speaker, Stephanie Richard. She is Policy and Legal Services Director for the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, Stephanie.

Ms. Stephanie Richard: Hi, thank you all for joining the call today. We're very excited that the child welfare bill that was seventh, not easy, I'm sorry, [INDISCERNIBLE] is re-entered today by Representative Bass' office and Representative Brucia's office. We sent out the bills pact as well as a summary of the bills. It has been significantly altered but the core concept and the purposes of the bill remain the same. Some of the alterations in the bill language were because of technical consult from the Department of Health and Human Services. But we also had more time to pick up much support in our organization but yet afford to tell and clarify all in what we wanted. So first I just wanted to speak about our past advocacy on the bill so we will know where we've been and then how far we have to go. So the bill was originally instituted on August 1, 2011. And it was the original post-practice review was Representative Karen Bass from California and Representative Tom Marino. At the end of the legislative cycle, we had 24 co-sponsors, 18 Democrats and 16 Republicans. You know, ATEST did considerable outreach to try to get Republicans to sign off the bill. And we purposely really avoided doing a lot of Democratic outreach because we just want the bill to show balance. So the Republicans that initially signed on, Tom Marino, the original co-sponsor, Chabot from Ohio, Bill Johnson from Ohio, Steve Stivers from Ohio, Bill Cassidy from Louisiana and Daniel Whiterose from California. So what we found in our Republican outreach is that we really targeted those with a law enforcement background. And in Ohio we were so successful in getting Republicans to sign on because the Ohio Attorney General was doing so such cutting edge issue on the issue of traffic in that state. But it has been a more uphill battle than we thought. For example, I personally did outreach to all I think it was 14 Republicans from California because half the state is California. And although no one said they opposed the bill, the Senate

really [INDISCERNIBLE] oppositions to it, in the end only one person from California ended up signing off. So I think, you know, we do I think hopefully in this legislative cycle, they'll perform that momentum, that energy to amass this important piece of legislation. Also past actions that ATEST has done have generated support around this issue; we did a very comprehensive NGO sign on letter. And I believe at the end, we had over 150 organizations that signed on the support of last year's bill. And so we'll be circulating a similar letter after this call in hopes that the same organizations, the few organizations, will sign on again to support the legislation. We also conducted a [INDISCERNIBLE] that was from both the Senate and the House. And there were over 100 people in attendance and standing room only for cessation on the bills. So, you know, we have done a lot of education outreach as well as I think this is our third national call for organization on this bill as well as last year we did a special call that was targeting child welfare agencies in all 50 of the states to really have a discussion with them on this issue. And we had over 100 participants. And our general feedback from that call was that child welfare agencies were interested and excited to learn more. And we didn't hear any direct opposition to the bill. And, you know, we really have been doing this education outreach because we think this is a very important people legislation, but we also are trying to start a national dialogue of how our child welfare system needs to be reformed to better address this system. And I think we're really seeing concrete steps now that safer steps have been changed. Because although this is a federal bill, you know, a lot of what needs to be done is at the state level and what we want to see is a more coordinated and information sharing effort. So with that, Cory, will you introduce the next speaker?

Mr. Cory Smith: Sure, thank you Stephanie. And wanted to reiterate what Stephanie said, the appreciation to you, all around the country, state and local and all your work on child welfare and human trafficking to get us to this exciting moment for reintroduction of the bill and I think a real opportunity to get legislation passed. With that, you know, we want to raise up and really thank Representative Bass for her leadership and staunch support on behalf of child welfare and human trafficking and making this legislation happen and working hard to get it reintroduced. With that, I wanted to introduce Jenny Wood who is Director of Operations and Legislative Assistant for Representative Karen Bass. Jenny will give us an update on the bill language. And Jenny, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to you.

Ms. Jenny Wood: Great, thanks Cory. Well thanks everyone for joining the call. And it is exciting today. The strengthening child welfare response, the Trafficking Act was re-introduced. It again has been revised, which we'll talk about the changes in just a bit. But I first wanted to talk about the level of support with lead original co-sponsors. So we had 13 members who are original co-sponsors of the bill. Of those, four are Republicans and the remaining are Democrats. And two are on the Committee of Jurisdiction which is ways and means. The thing that's good news, a good starting point for the momentum on this bill and there has been a lot of talk with a number of members on the Committee of Jurisdiction in the Senate as well in terms of getting their companion bill introduced as well. I'm not sure exactly when the timing is on that, but we definitely have gotten assurance that that will be happening, which is great news. So in terms of the content of the bill, I'll go through just the bill by sections. And if anyone has questions, clearly just let us know and we'll go through the questions section of the call. But the first major section is on best practices guidelines. And this directs the Department of Health and Human Services to develop and publish specific guidelines to assist child welfare agencies in serving youth who are in their care, particularly foster youth who are victims of trafficking and also those youth who are at risk of becoming victims, so providing them with guidelines and guidance on how to best educate and help prevent trafficking from occurring within the foster youth population. This will include personnel training materials, protocols and screening tools, service delivery strategies, recommendations on cross system collaboration, as well as best practices related to data collection and residential placements. So that's the major first crux of the bill. Next there's a section entitled "Streamlined Data Collection and Reporting." And this section of the bill requires reporting in three specific ways and data collection. First, within the state plans that each child welfare agency is required to submit to HHS, the child welfare agencies would be required to specify specific information about child victims of

trafficking, what they're doing within their agency. Additionally, they would be required to report youth who have been missing or trafficked to law enforcement for entry into the National Crime Information Center Database. And then there's also a requirement related to provisions of the Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act which goes beyond youth that are in out of home care or in foster care, but also addresses the general population of children who may have come into contact with child welfare through allegations or incidents of child abuse and neglect, but who may not be officially under the custodial care of child welfare agencies. This would require states to actually come up with plans and submit those to HHS on how they're going to prevent and also track and document the occurrence of youth being trafficked and sort of broad more state plans. This would then be reported, the data that would be collected would be reported to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, so three very specific and different means of reporting and data collection. The next section of the bill is the report to Congress. This would direct the Department of Health and Human Services to submit a report to Congress that outlines the prevalence of trafficking among the foster youth population including state level data. It would also discuss trends generally related to both sex and labor trafficking and evaluate the feasibility of collecting annual or semi-annual data from agencies across the country. It would also ask that HHS come back to Congress and propose an ongoing method of support and monitoring of child welfare agencies in respect to this particular intersection of population. And that pretty much gets us through the bill. I think I'll stop there unless there's anything else folks would like me to discuss.

Mr. Cory Smith: Thank you very much Jenny and thanks to you for all your hard work on this bill and to other advocates and experts and again, we really appreciate the Congresswoman's leadership on this issue. Keep in mind everyone on the call will have plenty of time for questions for Jenny and the other panelists. So if you have some for Jenny, just make note of it and we'll get to questions in a little bit. I would also note that you should have, by email, notice of the call and if you wanted to follow up by email, there'll be contact info there. There's also an email at the ATEST website. That's info@endslaveryandtrafficking.org that you can use as well for any follow up. So now I'm going to turn to our panel. We have a panel on national trends. I'm going to introduce each speaker for the panel and then Carol, I'll turn it over to you. So our first panelist on the national trend section is Carol Molinsky who's the Executive Director for EPCAT USA. After that will be Stephanie Richard again, Policy and Legal Services Director with Cast. And then we will have Keeli Sorensen, Director of Training and Advocacy with Safe Horizon and then James Dold, Senior Policy Counsel with Polaris Project. So Carol, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to you.

Ms. Carol Smolensky: Sure, thanks Cory. I'll just give a quick update on legislation in New York State. So the New York State budget for this next year has appropriated 1.6 million dollars for services for sexually exploited children. That's a great step forward because the Safe Harbor Law had passed five years ago without appropriations. And slowly they are trying to roll out some money for it. There are some weaknesses in the New York State Safe Harbor Law that are being addressed with some competing proposals for protecting especially the 16 and 17 year olds who were not covered by Safe Harbor in its first weak version. New York State, of course, is one of only two states in the country which still treats all 16 and 17 year olds in the adult criminal justice system. That's for all crimes. So there's a couple of competing proposals for changing that. And so we'll see what happens as the legislative session goes forth. Also, the New York Counsel is considering a bill that would require New York City's Child Protective Service Agency to report annually to the Counsel about the number of sexually exploited children that it had seen and assisted in that previous year. Just a couple of other things; JCCA which is the primary service provider for trafficked girls within the state child welfare system is expanding from their current 13 beds to 6 beds, sorry with an additional 6 beds I understand. And they are also still seeking, they're doing a specialized foster care program like some other states are and are seeking additional foster care parents to be trained for this special population. So I think I will leave that part of the update at that.

Ms. Stephanie Richard: Thank you so much Carol, this is Stephanie. So I'm going to talk about now some developments on the West Coast since CAST was based in California. So I think that California has been slow to start addressing this issue to the child welfare system. But now we're gradually gaining momentum. And while [INDISCERNIBLE] for CAST is located, there were a series of newspaper articles that came out that highlighted that between 60 and 85 percent of girls arrested for prostitution had had contact with the child welfare system. And therefore there was a vote by our Board of Los Angeles County Commissioners to start a task force led by our Department of Children and Family Services to better address this issue. That task force has now met three separate times and the idea is to have a more coordinated plan for services in the way of identifying children within that. And given the extent of the problem in Los Angeles, we're hoping that this will help develop protocols that can also be used statewide. On the legislative fronts in California, Senator Nee introduced a bill that I wouldn't label safe harbor, but we're calling the first important step in having a better coordinated response for this issue. So it does two things. It provides jurisdiction for children who are victims of human trafficking; that's both sex and labor trafficking, to have jurisdiction of the child welfare system because this is as we know children's exploiters are often third party than not a parent or guardian. And so this would provide access to those services. Additionally, the bill creates a conference of statewide plans which is hosted through our Child Welfare Counsel which has already been looking into this to look at identifying, serving and the gaps in services for all child victims of trafficking. At CAST we see this as an important first step but there were two important components of legislation that we felt like were left out. One would be a straight decriminalization of children under the age of 18 for prostitution offenses in California. As, you know, I think the [INDISCERNIBLE] were that 14 percent of those arrested for prostitution in California are under the age of 14, and obviously it's statutory rape in California like in most states if no money has exchanged hands. And the second component deals with our dual jurisdiction system so kids can be both in dependency and delinquency. So in California they're called 241.1 kids and they can have 300 and 600 designations. And in the past what we've seen is that the court order delinquency in general to be a lead on these dual jurisdiction kids. And so we're hoping in our next legislative cycle to change that and have the judges then make a decision if the child is trafficked and if the crime is related to the trafficking. And then that child must be seen with attendance vehicles with the whole scheme or really changing the culture of our system to say if we're identifying someone's a victim and the crime is related to that crime itself, then we should be utilizing the system that of course abusing the neglected children and not a delinquency model. So that's some of the updates from California. Now I will turn it over for Keeli Sorensen to give an update on hers.

Ms. Keeli Sorensen: Hi, thanks Stephanie. This is Keeli Sorensen. I am the Training and Advocacy Director for Safe Horizons Anti-Trafficking Program. Safe Horizon is one of the country's leading victim assistance organizations. We work with approximately 250,000 people affected by crime and abuse each year. We are very excited about the legislation put forth by Representative Bass. Safe Horizon operates runaway and homeless youth programs and a program for trafficked people of all ages. We are very, very confident that the provisions in this legislation are going to assist child protective services nationwide to better identify and respond to both sex and labor trafficking of children. In the last year, Safe Horizon had the privilege of partnering with New York City's Administration of Children's Service. We trained more than 500 child protective staff to identify and respond to child sex trafficking. Based on that experience, I know first-hand how eager child protective services staff are for guidance on identification, documentation and create in-service plans for vulnerable youth, specifically foster youth, which is highlighted in this legislation. I'm also; I think this legislation is very auspiciously timed. Unlike ever before, I think the federal government as well as law enforcement, social workers, school administrators and the public are taking steps to address the trafficking of children. Safe Horizon was recently funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs to identify training and technical assistance resources for folks who interact and work with children who have been commercially sexually exploited. So we're actually going to be surveying internet crimes against children, task forces, as well as children's advocacy centers and some of OJJDP's service providers to find out what their barriers are and what their

challenges are around serving sex trafficked children specifically. We're really excited that this legislation is coming out that we're going to be able to look to the field for what they need so we can continue to provide that and hopefully feed that back into the policy process. But I think right now is the time to move a lot of these kinds of programs forward and we're very excited that Representative Bass is leading that. With that I will turn it over to James Dold of Polaris Project.

Mr. James Dold: Thank you so much Keeli and thanks to Cory and Humanity United and ATEST for putting this wonderful call together. You know, I thought I might just start out just by highlighting the importance of Representative Bass' bill. And you know a couple of years ago in the District of Colombia; we actually prosecuted and convicted a pimp who had actually gained custody in the state of Maryland of the young girls that he was abusing. They were actually living in his home and he had custody of them. And this was clearly a huge problem within the system. The system had multiple failures of how that had actually could come into being. And so the importance of this bill I don't think can really be overstated at all, the importance of making sure that there are no gaps in the system so that children who are being sexually exploited don't end up in the wrong hands and that there are protective measures in place to insure that that doesn't happen. And so I think that's one important component of it because I think everyone on the call knows that, you know, especially when we're talking about children who are going to be in the child welfare system, kids who are coming from broken families who already have a ton of issues and self-esteem issues that go along with all that. That's where pimps and traffickers are going to be targeting their efforts to recruit those types of young women into their system. And so that's a really important component of this bill. The other part is, you know, one of the great things about my job is I get to travel around the country and I get to work with child welfare agencies and attorney generals and prosecutors all over the country. And one of the things that is a recurring theme that I have seen over the last few years is that there is this recognition amongst law enforcement and prosecutors in the child welfare system that victims of child sex trafficking don't currently have an appropriate home within the state government itself. On the one hand, you have kids who through the eyes of law enforcement and prosecutors, have engaged in a violation of prostitution statutes. So, on the one hand a lot of folks say well, they should be treated within the juvenile justice system. On the other hand, we recognize that those kids are victims of a crime and that if you're a victim of a crime, that from a human rights perspective, you shouldn't be criminalized and you shouldn't be housed in juvenile detention facilities. The problem as it seems over the last few years is the issue of sort of what to do with these kids when there is no home for them. And the child welfare system, you know, just to sort of give a little bit of a background on this, most child welfare systems across the country have been developed specifically with the idea of family reunification in mind, that is that they're dealing specifically with abused and neglected children within a nuclear family, and the idea is to reunite that family as fast as possible, right? And so you could have a situation where you have a kid who maybe doesn't come from a broken family and the family is fine but the kid runs away and is abused by a john or by a pimp and child welfare doesn't quite know how to handle that situation and to provide services because they've never previously been designated the point agency for those particular types of issues. And so I think one of the great things that happened with the advent of Safe Harbor legislation nationally is that we have begun to say actually this is the area where child welfare also needs to step up and play an active role because they're coming into contact and serving kids with similar issues, whether it's child sexual abuse or a whole host of things. And so they are the more appropriate agency to be dealing with this population rather than keeping these kids in the juvenile justice system. So oftentimes what we're seeing with a lot of the Safe Harbor laws that have been passed across the country is a recognition that whether you have a diversion model in place, that is a program specifically designated within the juvenile justice system that will allow children to be diverted away from prosecution and into services like they have in New York, in Washington State, in Connecticut and Massachusetts, a whole host of states. Then VCFS will also be responsible for helping to coordinate the delivery of services and making sure that there is a coordinated response in place. The other point of that is that if you have kids that have been granted immunity, in other words, they can't be prosecuted or adjudicated delinquent in juvenile justice system, then those kids

would be eligible for the same types of services. Right now there's about three states across the country that have blanket immunity for these kids and that's Tennessee, Illinois and most recently, Kentucky. And so in those three states, kids cannot be adjudicated delinquent or be prosecuted in criminal courts for prostitution related offenses. Vermont also has a similar model, although it's not as expansive as what's in place in those other three states I mentioned. And the importance of having the child welfare system play an important role again can't be overstated because one of the principal concerns I think from what we see from the law enforcement and prosecutor community is that, you know, it's all great to not want to prosecute these kids, but it doesn't make a difference if we don't have an effective child welfare response in place, if these kids aren't being identified early on, if they're not being given the services that they need. And that's why the important point that Carol raised earlier is so very important to all of this which is the appropriation of funds specifically for services. So in addition to New York, Governor Rick Scott in Florida as well as the governor in Minnesota recently called for two million dollar appropriations in their state budget to help fund Safe Harbor legislation as well in this fiscal year. And so that's been another amazing trend that we've seen with the states that have taken this on, is actually now following through and delivering the funding that's needed to establish safe houses where kids can go and could be an alternative to detention. You know that's the other big part of this which is developing a system where instead of having to take a kid down to baby booking or holding them in juvenile detention, there's another place that kids can be taken to. There's some great places that are currently operating in Texas. Freedom Place is an amazing center where the folks there have really developed a model, I think, that can help form the basis for a national model potentially, where they have a safe house that's established outside of the urban major, metropolitan centers. It's a staff secured facility, not a secured detention facility. So it complies with the requirements of federal law. And it's a place where kids can go and not feel like they're not being criminalized as a result of activities that they were forced to engage in. And I mention again that the federal law, and this is another component that I think is important to touch on, which is that kids right now when they're arrested, if they're found to be a child in need of services or a child in need of care in most states, once they've been designated as such, they can't be held in secured detention facilities. And so it's a little bit of an interesting dynamic that takes place in the juvenile justice courts where it's very important that before a kid is diverted, they make sure that they have the services and programs in place because once those kids have been diverted, they can no longer be housed in those types of facilities, which I ultimately think is the goal of Safe Harbor legislation and the goal of all the advocates working across the country. And so that's why it's also vitally important that we have funding for these services. And so, you know, across the country we're seeing more and more of these Safe Harbor laws pop up. As Stephanie mentioned earlier, what they're trying to do with dual jurisdiction in the state of California, we have a similar bill SV92 that's pending in the state of Texas that we've worked on quite closely with Children at Risk. And Children at Risk in Texas has actually been taking a lead role in the formation of that legislation. But again, the idea is that once you have kids that have been identified as child sex trafficking victims and even though they're in the juvenile system, to make sure that there is this dual jurisdiction that there's a court that oversees all of the cases that a kid might be coming into court on. And so instead of having this silo effect where one judge is seeing a kid for a prostitution related offense and another judge is seeing a kid because they're coming from an abused and neglected home, that one judge would be assigned to that one child and they would have complete jurisdiction over all of the cases that that kid is involved in. And that's so important because it's oftentimes very difficult to make informed and good decisions based on the best interest of the child unless you have all the information on that kid's background. So that's some of the very interesting things that are going on in Texas. Arkansas recently passed a partial Safe Harbor law that's going to require the Department of Children and Family Services there to develop protocols on how to coordinate the delivery of services to sexually exploited children. And when we define sexually exploited children, I'm also using that term very broadly to include kids who would traditionally be defined as child sex trafficking victims, as well as any other kid who might be engaged in "survival sex" or anything like that. So basically any kid who's engaged or suspected of engaging in an act of prostitution would be designated a victim under the Arkansas statute and would be eligible to receive these types of services.

To date there's 13 states that have passed some form of Safe Harbor, either partial or full Safe Harbor laws. And I just want to give a shout out real quickly to the Kentucky law that I mentioned earlier, HB3 that was sponsored by Representative Overlie. You know in my opinion in looking at all the Safe Harbor laws that have been developed over the last few years, I think that Kentucky is the most comprehensive and perhaps the best Safe Harbor law in the nation at this point. I think that some of the important provisions is one, it grants blanket immunity to child sex trafficking victims so that those kids can't be prosecuted in juvenile court. But the other fascinating thing that that law did was that it also made sure that when other kids are coming into the system on other types of status offenses such as loitering or trespassing or curfew and they're identified early on as also being a child sex trafficking victim and they were arrested in conjunction with being a sexually exploited child, that they would also be eligible for diversion. Oftentimes in talking to prosecutors and law enforcement, kids who are on the streets will get arrested for status offenses because law enforcement and prosecutors are very concerned about the stigma that comes with having a prostitution on their arrest record. So what they'll do is arrest them for some other offense which is good but also bad because those kids can then fall through the cracks. And what this Kentucky bill did was it created a safety net for those kids who were arrested on other types of status offenses so that even if they are arrested for something else, that they would be eligible for this diversion program and for services for sexually exploited children. It's really a great bill. We had nothing to do with it, the Polaris project. That was all Gretchen Hunt and Marylee Underwood with the Kentucky Sexual Assault Programs. They did a phenomenal job drafting that bill. And there's so many great things happening around the country, you know. I know PATH, Pacific Life to Stop Slavery and EmuAlliance have been working on a Safe Harbor bill in Hawaii. CAST obviously in California. There's so many great organizations that are really spearheading Safe Harbor efforts around the country. And it is a trend that we've seen more and more. And it's great to see child welfare services and prosecutors and law enforcement all get behind efforts to enact comprehensive Safe Harbor laws. And so I've been talking for a while. With that, I'm going to turn it back over to Cory. And I'd be happy to answer any questions anybody has about any of the pending legislation or anything related to Safe Harbor.

Mr. Cory Smith: Great, thank you James and thank you Carol, Stephanie and Keeli for the update on national trends, very helpful. Just one last item that will be quick and then I'll turn it over to the operator to open it up for questions and answers. But I just want to mention briefly Action Steps. Some of the speakers have already touched on it. But a big priority obviously is getting co-sponsors for the legislation. You all are constituents, you are in-state, you're local. You know what's going on in your state in the ground. You know the need for this legislation. You have relationships with your members. It's really important we get co-sponsors for this bill, really important that we have a focus also in getting Republican or getting in good bipartisan number of members supporting these bills. And we'll send out, you know, a follow-up email, some information on the previous co-sponsors and also some information about, you know, members that are particularly important to look at and try to get to co-sponsor the legislation. We will also do a national sign on letter endorsing the legislation and so watch your email in the future for a letter endorsing the legislation. And make sure your organization shares and you share with state and local partners. This won't happen without your work. You guys are, essentially you're constituents. You vote, you're on the ground. You're experts. And so it's really important with your work to get this bill done. Action alerts, you know, that's the usual checklist of doing action alerts to your membership, your grassroots, your grass cops, social media, utilizing social media to raise awareness and get folks engaged and get folks to work on securing co-sponsors to Twitter and Facebook and other social media; so just wanted to mention those and to watch your email for follow up from us on some direction and information on co-sponsors to seek to co-sponsor the bill and also for a sign on letter. And with that, operator, I wanted to turn over to you to open it up for questions.

Larissa: Thank you and I'll begin the question and answer session. If you have a question, please press zero, then one on your touchtone phone. If you wish to be removed from the queue, please press zero then two. If you're using a speakerphone, you may need to pick up the handset before pressing the

numbers. Once again, if there are any questions, please press zero then one on your touchtone phone. Standing by for questions. We have a question from Katerina Rosenblatt from There is Hope for Me.

Ms. Katerina Rosenblatt: Hi, thank you. I was hoping to see if we could add onto Section 3 under collaborations to include schools, because we've done quite a bit of outreach here in Miami and Broward County and found 18 kids came forward that they had either experienced trafficking or had been recruited through Facebook. And so we're having to train the school resource officers and mental health counselors in the schools. And I think that's going to be a very important piece in the cooperation process. So if that's something that could be added as well as including federal law enforcement, because I saw that there was state and local police, but federal law enforcement are very well versed on the procedures and how to handle trafficking and identify it while the state and local police are getting onboard with this. I just know because I do training with locals as well. So those are just my suggestions to continue adding the voices of survivors [INDISCERNIBLE]. Thank you.

Larissa: The next question comes from Sister Carmel from Sister of Mercy, Roseland, California.

Sister Carmel: Yes, this is Sister Carmel. I'd like to ask Stephanie about the Pavley Bills. We were up in Sacramento just recently and we were advocating on this. And is this something that will really be good to change the designation from, you know, somebody who is legally a victim rather than a person who should be punished. Because I see too many girls in juvenile hall that I know have been trafficked. And what is the future of this bill?

Ms. Stephanie Richard: I'm sorry. I didn't hear the bill you mentioned. Was it the EC738 Bill or did you say it's the Pavley Bill?

Sister Carmel: It's the Pavley Bill. It's an extension of that because it's going to sunset in 2014. And they want to advance it to 2017. And do you know anything about it?

Ms. Stephanie Richard: Yeah, so there's two pilot programs in California; one in Almeida County and one actually in Los Angeles, California. There's been, you know, good leadership from the DA's office in Almeida County which really kind of started this first program as well as from Commissioner Pratt and Probation Services in LA. You know this is a really difficult question because these programs were the first of their kind in California that really recognized that these children needed supportive services. CAST has actively engaged with the program here in California. However, you know the starting point for these programs are arrest and detention of children. And that is the way that children are receiving specialized services. So in the long run, you know, we at CAST believe that a better model is for kids not to be arrested and detained, to be mandated into services. However, given the current gap in what we have in California right now, we don't want to squash any of these very new pilot efforts that have been developing the most specialized programs. So although the Pavley Bill is not a priority piece of legislation for CAST, you know, we're not taking a stand on it. And those are kind of some of the backgrounds, ideas behind that. Does that answer your question or do you have—

Sister Carmel: Yes, I think we'll still keep advocating for us, because at least it's a step. Here in San Bernardino County, we're very little, so.

Ms. Stephanie Richard: Yeah, definitely, it's a starting place.

Larissa: The next question is from Christine Raino from Spirit House International.

Ms. Eliza Reock: Hi, this is actually Eliza Reock for Shared Group International. In Section 4, the term best practices is used in relation to residential placement for past reviews. I'm interested to know just

because, you know, we've been through research, that just a handful of organizations have been providing programs specific for trafficked youth in foster care for even more than five years. And of those organizations, you know, very few have been trafficking success rates. So is there an evaluation method in mind or how are you thinking about within a year from now being able to back up research that indicates best practices?

Ms. Jenny Wood: This is Jenny. In regards to the bill, I mean I think that in a lot of these cases unfortunately there is not a whole lot of research or very many specific, particularly child welfare organizations that have specific residential programs tailored to this community. So I think you're right. I think that there still has been some degree of program and there is, you know, in terms of the guidance and the recommendations that HHS comes up with, I think we leave that to them to reach out far and wide to explore all possibilities and to come up with a set of recommendations and lead thinking to be used as a tool for child welfare organizations on the ground. Of course, we understand that that lead thinking or those resources may be continuing to evolve and to get strengthened on the ground and other places. But I think that the intent of this bill was not to say give child welfare agencies this specific answer but instead provide them with thoughts and recommendations and guidance on what may be being done around the country and how they could incorporate some practice within their agencies tailored of course to their particular local and, you know, local needs for a variety of reasons, the size of their population, you know and a variety of other specifics to that jurisdiction. Does that answer your question?

Ms. Eliza Reock: Yeah, I think that makes a lot of sense. I just wonder again if the wording should be reconsidered because a year from now will we have best practices.

Ms. Jenny Wood: Sure.

Ms. Eliza Reock: Yeah.

Ms. Stephanie Richard: Alright, I just want to say to piggyback on what Jenny has said. I think the idea behind this bill is to really help aid a national dialogue on trafficking and, you know, protocols and practices for child trafficking victims. And what we've seen a lot is that there are some people really working hard on this issue but they're really operating in silos. So this is where the federal government can play a role in compiling that information. And it could be that as they compile the information, they see these huge gaps and needs in areas where we have nothing. And I think that also is important to be able to highlight so that we know where our future energy and focus needs to be. And I also want to just highlight that this bill is significant and that it looks at all types of trafficking, child sex and child labor trafficking and we really have not developed any, in compared to sex trafficking, we have not developed any kind of resources or best practices around child labor trafficking in the past. And again, perhaps, you know, this bill will highlight those gaps in services needs as well.

Ms. Eliza Reock: Great, thank you.

Mr. Cory Smith: Next question operator.

Larissa: The next question comes from Hannah Hailey from West Coast Children's Clinic.

Ms. Hannah Hailey: Hi everybody. Thank you so much. I'm curious to hear a little bit if anybody has any more details about sort of some of the critical moments that will come up in the process through the house or as it works, you know, if there is a companion bill introduced in the Senate. Like what are going to be the critical moments in the process or what do you expect to see happen there?

Ms. Jenny Wood: This is Jenny from Representative Bass' office. I think that there are a number of possibilities for the bill's movement. If we are able to line up support within the Ways and Means Committee on the House side, there is some potential for the bill to move through suspension of the rules which means that it's sort of expedited without having to go through a committee hearing and be marked up and it would then be required that two thirds of the House vote in favor of the bill. And then of course the Senate would also have to pass the bill as well. They have a slightly different form of expediting bills, called the hotline process. So if we are able to line up the support, now that is a big if, and that would mean that no one could raise an objection, etc. The other option I think in regards to moving the bill is looking at what other bills are moving as it relates to child welfare and particularly the Social Security Act Title 4E, which is where this bill is located in terms of amendments to statute. There is a bill that needs to be reauthorized this year within that title called Adoption Incentives. And it relates to a number of child welfare dollars that primarily are focused on incentivizing states to increase their rates of adoption. However, in past years that particular reauthorization has prompted, so in 2008 they reauthorized adoption incentives in a much larger bill that touched upon various issues related to child welfare community. And that bill was called Fostering Connections and it did a number of things well outside the scope of adoption. So there is some possibility given, you know, the general support from both sides of the aisle on both sides of the Capital bicameral issue as well, that this would be something that they would consider wrapping up into a larger bill as they reauthorize adoption incentives. But that's still something that needs to be further discussed and we have not gotten any kind of commitment from the members or staff with the means or finance committee on that front. But those are two possibilities of movement. And of course we'll continue to explore other possibilities of how this bill could particularly move. Of course with Trafficking Victims Protection Act already, you know, signed into law in this year, that is no longer a potential vehicle.

Ms. Hannah Hailey: Great, that is very helpful. Thank you.

Mr. Cory Smith: Do we have another question up?

Larissa: We do not have any further questions.

Mr. Cory Smith: Okay, any last questions?

Larissa: Once again, if you have a question, please press zero then one. And I'm showing no further questions.

Mr. Cory Smith: Okay, well thank you very much everyone for taking the time to join today. Your involvement and participation is essential to getting this bill passed. We will send out follow up by email and wanted to thank our panelists and wanted to thank Representative Bass for her leadership on this bill. And Jenny, thank you for taking the time to be on today's call and for all your work. We will be in touch and please contact your members of Congress and urge them to co-sponsor this bill and watch for the sign on letter and some other materials by email. Thank you and everyone have a good day.

Larissa: Thank you ladies and gentlemen. This concludes today's conference. Thank you for participating. You may now disconnect.