



**Alliance To End
Slavery & Trafficking**

1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20006

October 18, 2016

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Rob Portman
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Ann Wagner
435 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Tulsi Gabbard
1609 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative David Jolly
1728 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Gillibrand and Portman and Representatives Wagner, Gabbard, and Jolly:

The Alliance to End Slavery & Trafficking (ATEST) and **the 165** undersigned organizations are proud to support the **Trafficking Survivors Relief Act (S. 3441 and H.R. 6292)** Human trafficking victims are often forced to commit crimes by their traffickers as part of their trafficking experience. Human traffickers can use explicit threats or psychological coercion to manipulate their victims. This legislation is an important step towards removing barriers that prevent victims from having the chance to rebuild their lives.

We know that trafficking victims with criminal convictions often encounter substantial obstacles as they attempt to rebuild their lives. These hurdles include barriers to employment, housing, public benefits, and other supportive systems. Former trafficking victims are also often stigmatized as criminals. As one survivor aptly puts it, "Even after I was freed I still feel the invisible bonds of criminal convictions."

Trafficking victims in the United States have suffered enough. The Trafficking Survivors Relief Act takes critical steps to eliminate the barriers that criminal arrests and convictions create for trafficking survivors. The Act also puts in place a comprehensive system to ensure that trafficking survivors – both sex and labor, adults and children – are able to clear their federal criminal records so that they can leave their trafficking experience behind them.

Important provisions in the Post-Conviction Trafficking Act include:

- A person convicted of **non-violent federal offenses** may petition a court to vacate the arrests and/or convictions if the person’s participation in the offense was the **direct result** of having been a victim of trafficking;
- If a court grants the motion to vacate, the court vacates the arrest and/or conviction, enters a judgment of acquittal, and expunges the record;
- The trafficking victim’s identity is protected; no officer or employee may make public any document or image that identifies the victim; and
- Specified procedural processes to ensure that trafficking victims can establish eligibility for this provision by providing certified criminal or immigration court proceedings or law enforcement records demonstrating that the individual was a victim of trafficking at the time they were charged with the trafficking-related offense. If this information is not available, other testimony and sworn statements can also establish eligibility as many trafficking victims will not have official documentation because of the nature of human trafficking crimes.

Criminal convictions for trafficking victims create insurmountable barriers to the very support systems that survivors need to recover. A survey by the National Survivor Network (NSN) published in 2016 indicated that **80%** of trafficking survivors surveyed had lost or not received employment because of their criminal convictions and **50%** had suffered from barriers to accessing housing. As the NSN survey demonstrates, criminal convictions that stem from trafficking leave scars that follow victims later in life and affect them educationally, occupationally, financially, and psychologically.

For these reasons ATEST and the undersigned organizations strongly endorse the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act, which provides hope and a clearer pathway for trafficking survivors seeking a new and brighter future.

Sincerely,

Albany County Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center
Amara Legal Center
American Medical Student Association
American Psychological Association
API Legal Outreach
Araminta Freedom Initiative
ArtWorks for Freedom

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles
Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition
Black Women Organization for Political Action
Bob Parsons Veterans Advocacy Clinic
Bon Secours Health System, Inc.
California National Organization for Women (NOW)
California Partnership to End Domestic Violence
Catholic Health Initiatives
Center for the Human Rights of Children, Loyola University Chicago
Centering Space
Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition
Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta/Emory University
Christian Church Foundation
Civil Society
Coalition Against Trafficking & Exploitation
Coalition Against Trafficking in Women
Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)
Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST)
College and Community Fellowship
Community Service Society of New York
Congregation of Holy Cross Moreau Province
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Congregation of the Infant Jesus
Courtney's House
CREA: Center for Reflection, Education and Action
Dana Investment Advisors
Daughters of Charity
Daughters of Charity, Province of St. Louise
Dawn's Place
DC Alliance of Youth Advocates
DC-MD Justice for Our Neighbors
Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center

Dignity Health
Domini Social Investments LLC
Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids
Dominican Sisters of Hope
Elevation Law LLC
ENC Stop Human Trafficking Now
End Child Prostitution and Trafficking – USA (ECPAT-USA)
End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin
End Slavery Tennessee
End Trafficking Project, U.S. Fund for UNICEF
Everence and the Praxis Mutual Funds
FAIR Girls
FB Consulting
First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Sisters Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Advisory Committee
Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY
Free the Slaves
Freedom Network USA
Friends Fiduciary Corporation
Friends of Farmworkers, Inc.
Futures Without Violence
Global Centurion
Greater Boston Legal Services
HEAL Trafficking
HER Resiliency Center
Hispanic Psychiatry Clinic
HopeWorks of Howard County, Inc.
Independent Advocate
Independent Consultant - Globalsw.org
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility
International Institute of Connecticut
International Justice Mission (IJM)

International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA)
Kristi House
Law Office of Shara Svendsen
Love146
MANY
Maternal and Child Health Access
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Mennonite Education Agency
Mercy Health
Mercy Investment Services
Midwest Coalition for Responsible Investment
Miller/Howard Investments, Inc.
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate - JPIC
MISSEY
Modern Slavery Research Project
Mosaic Family Services
My Life My Choice
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
National Child Labor Committee
National Council of Jewish Women
National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA)
National Network for Youth (NN4Y)
Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence
Nest Foundation
New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment
Polaris
Portfolio Advisory Board, Adrian Dominican Sisters
Project IRENE
Region VI Coalition for Responsible Investment
Religious sisters of charity
Responsible Sourcing Network
Rethreaded

Ricky Martin Foundation
Rights4Girls
S.A.F.E.
SAFE Coalition for Human Rights (SAFECHR)
Safe Horizon
Safehouse of hope
School Sisters of Notre Dame Cooperative Investment Fund
School Sisters of Notre Dame, CPP Shalom-JPIC Office
Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center
Sisters of Charity Health System
Sisters of Charity of New York
Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine
Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sisters of Charity, Halifax
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community
Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine
Sisters of St. Dominic of Caldwell NJ
Sisters of St. Joseph
Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Slavery Today Journal
Snohomish Psychology Associates
Society of the Holy Child Jesus, American Province
Solidarity Center
St. Joseph Health
Stop Modern Slavery
Support
Tahirih Justice Center
TAMUCC
Thai Community Development Center
The Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies
The Bronx Defenders
The Human Thread
The Human Trafficking Prevention Project

The Jewish Federations of North America
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
The Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc.
TheView36k
Trauma Center at JRI
Tri-State Coalition Responsible Investment
Trinity Health
TX Association Against Sexual Assault
U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking - Executive Committee
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Women
University of Baltimore School of Law
Ursuline Lay Associates, Wilmington, DE
Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk, U.S. Province
Ursulines of the Roman Union - Eastern Province
Verité
Vital Voices Global Partnership
Volunteer Lawyers for Justice
Walk Free
Washoe Legal Services
West Florida Center for Trafficking Advocacy
WestCoast Children's Clinic
Worker Justice Center of New York
Worthh Ministries
Xaverian Brothers

ATEST is a U.S.-based coalition that advocates for solutions to prevent and end all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery around the world. 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, and Vital Voices Global Partnership. ATEST is a project of Humanity United Action.

