



**Alliance To End  
Slavery & Trafficking**

## **2020 Annual Advocacy Report**

**A summary of ATEST's 2020 activities and a forecast of 2021**

### **Election and Transition**

The 2020 campaign and election provided an important pivot point for the anti-trafficking movement. ATEST focused on promoting fact-based discourse on human trafficking and its root causes. With the election of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, ATEST has promoted restoring a whole-of-government approach to combating all forms of trafficking, and to strengthening prevention and protection programs as well as law enforcement prosecution efforts.

- ATEST published a [fact sheet for federal office seekers](#) to counter myths and false narratives in the campaign.
- ATEST joined the [Freedom Needs Truth open letter](#) to counter falsehoods about trafficking being propagated by QAnon.
- ATEST published a [comprehensive memorandum of recommendations](#) for the incoming Biden-Harris administration, as well as in-depth policy briefs on [COVID-19's impact on trafficking](#), [establishing a strong worker rights framework](#), [recommendations for a victim-centered approach to immigration](#), [recommendations for a federal law enforcement victim services protocol](#), and [addressing vulnerabilities to labor and sex trafficking](#).

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### **Federal Appropriations**

ATEST continues to prioritize federal appropriations advocacy with key congressional subcommittees and the Office of Management and Budget. ATEST has made recommendations for programs to combat trafficking and its root causes both inside the U.S. and globally across key federal agencies, including the Departments of Labor, State, Justice, Health and Human Services, Education, Homeland Security, and USAID.

- ATEST recommended nearly [\\$600 million in federal spending for FY 2021](#)
- ATEST recommended more than [\\$100 million in emergency support](#) to trafficking programs because of COVID-19 impacts
- ATEST is recommending more than [\\$900 million in federal spending for FY 2022](#)

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## Policy Engagement

ATEST took bold public stands and engaged with policymakers and federal staffers on a wide range of issues in 2020:

- ATEST [opposed a Tier 1 ranking for the U.S.](#) in the 2020 State Department Trafficking in Persons Report, asserting the ranking is unmerited and undermines the report's credibility.
- ATEST [opposed changes in U.S. asylum rules.](#)
- ATEST [called for sanctions on China](#) for forced labor of Uyghurs.
- ATEST [supported legislation to compensate survivors](#) who serve as members of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking.
- ATEST [opposed the hurry-up timeline by USAID to collect stakeholder input on revisions to its Counter Trafficking in Persons policy, and submitted comments](#) on the draft policy's shortcomings.
- ATEST [submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Labor](#) on ways to strengthen the department's anti-trafficking activities.
- ATEST met with U.S. Department of Labor International Labor Affairs Bureau staffers to discuss how the agency is implementing new regulations to prohibit the importation of products made with slavery-tainted inputs.
- ATEST met with the U.S. State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons staffers to discuss how the agency is implementing new regulations that require tier rankings in the annual Trafficking in Persons Report to be based on concrete results and not mere promises of action or geopolitical considerations.
- ATEST continued discussions with Homeland Security and Department of Justice staffers, including stakeholders from the FBI, National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (including Office for Victims of Crime) and ICE/HSI, to create a national victim-centered protocol for the treatment of trafficking victims/survivors by law enforcement and creation of methodologies to conduct a national prevalence survey in the U.S., as mandated in the 2018-2019 TVPA bill package.
- ATEST is serving on a communications roundtable of anti-trafficking groups to craft new narratives for the movement to frame the issues of modern slavery and human trafficking in ways that strengthen the cause and further unify the movement.



## ATEST Growth

ATEST added three new organizations in 2020, bringing membership to 15 and increasing the alliance's depth and breadth of expertise.

- **HEAL Trafficking** is a network of more than 3,500 survivors and multidisciplinary professionals in 35 countries building the capacity of health care systems and health professionals to respond to trafficking.
  - **Humanity United Action** is dedicated to cultivating the conditions for enduring freedom and peace. The organization develops relationships and engages with key government and advocacy stakeholders in pursuit of legal and policy change, regulatory action, and public funding.
  - **McCain Institute for International Leadership** implements programs and initiatives to make a difference in people's lives across a range of critical areas: leadership development, human rights, rule of law, national security, counterterrorism and combatting human trafficking.
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## 2021 ATEST Priorities

### Executive Branch

- **Strategic Global Leadership and Catalytic Investments in Prevention:** The Biden-Harris administration has the opportunity to spearhead a major turning point in the counter-trafficking in persons movement at a critical moment in the United States. The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the cracks we knew existed in our social safety net. We cannot address trafficking without reckoning with these problems. ATEST implores the new administration to prioritize prevention and address root causes of trafficking and forced labor, including racial inequity and climate change. Big, bold investments of resources in prevention efforts that address trafficking from a human rights approach are critical to provide balance and equity with existing investments in prosecutorial activities. Interagency cooperation is essential to prevent people from ever becoming trafficked. See ATEST specific recommendations, including our call for a presidential initiative on decent work, [here](#).

### Congress

- **Trafficking Victims Protection Act Reauthorization:** Many of the challenges in the fight against human trafficking can only be addressed by Congress. The TVPA is a seminal law that underpins U.S. efforts at home and abroad, and it is impossible to overstate the critical importance of keeping its provisions relevant and responsive to the



evolving realities on the ground. It is a responsibility as well as an opportunity, and now more than ever, ATEST believes the reauthorization must include significant fixes to existing authorities and must create new initiatives that are only achievable through legislative action. ATEST strongly urges Congress to support prioritizing provisions that focus more on prevention and the rights of survivors and victims.

- **Other Congressional Initiatives:** See ATEST's recommendations on visa and immigration reform, regulating recruiters of foreign labor, ending prison labor, supporting the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, supporting human rights due diligence legislation, integrating anti-trafficking strategies into all U.S. foreign assistance programs, supporting the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act reauthorization and passage of the Emergency Family Stabilization Act [here](#).

## Appropriations

- Starting in the fiscal year (FY) 22 Budget request, Congress and the administration should systematically scale up investments across government agencies to combat trafficking, including critical early investment in the development of an updated National Strategic Action Plan, funding for research methodology (including the unfunded National Institute of Justice (DOJ/NIJ) national TIP prevalence study and the HHS vulnerable populations study), full funding for the National Human Trafficking Hotline, increased funding for the International Labor Affairs Bureau, housing assistance for survivors and education for youth. See ATEST FY22 budget recommendations [here](#).

ATEST thanks the many staffers in U.S. government agencies, Congress, and other civil society organizations and coalitions who work together toward the common goal of ending all forms of modern slavery and human trafficking at home and abroad. Thanks also to our funder, the Oak Foundation and Neo Philanthropy, for their continued support.

*The [Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking \(ATEST\)](#) is a U.S.-based coalition that advocates for solutions to prevent and end all forms of human trafficking and forced labor around the world. ATEST member organizations include: Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST), Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), Free the Slaves, HEAL Trafficking, Human Trafficking Institute, Humanity United Action (HUA), McCain Institute for International Leadership, National Network for Youth (NN4Y), Polaris, Safe Horizon, Solidarity Center, T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, United Way Worldwide, Verité and Vital Voices Global Partnership.*

