



# Alliance To End Slavery & Trafficking

## ATEST Core Principles

### About ATEST

The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) is a coalition of U.S.-based human rights organizations that advocate for solutions to prevent and end human trafficking and modern slavery in the United States and around the world. ATEST members work to improve laws and government policies, increase governmental funding, research trends and most promising practices, and increase public awareness and action.

ATEST advocates for lasting solutions to prevent labor and sex trafficking, hold perpetrators accountable, ensure justice for victims, and empower survivors with tools for recovery. Our collective experience implementing programs in the United States and internationally provides our coalition unparalleled breadth and depth of expertise.

ATEST is dedicated to advancing human freedom by combating human trafficking and modern slavery, including forced labor. ATEST opposes the use of violence, coercion, threats, deception, or other methods — including acts to compel adults or to exploit vulnerabilities of children — to control another person for labor or commercial sexual exploitation.

### The Importance of Addressing Root Causes

Recognizing that human trafficking is caused, in part, by oppressive, marginalizing systems and policies resulting in power imbalances, we aim to integrate a framework that includes diversity, equity, inclusion, liberation, and intersectionality into our work. To guide this framework, we utilize the following definitions:

- **DIVERSITY:** Intentional representation of all stakeholders from various backgrounds
- **EQUITY:** Fair and just practices and policies that ensure everyone can thrive and participate equally, mindful that the experiences of some will require greater levels of investment by both ATEST and the wider anti-trafficking movement to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities
- **INCLUSION:** Meaningful, equal access to participation, which includes affected communities and survivors with lived experience, and considers power dynamics,

consensus building, and collaboration

- **LIBERATION:** Creating communities guided by equity and fairness, where everyone may participate and benefit from economic and social systems and services
- **INTERSECTIONALITY:** Overlapping and interactive forms of disempowerment, such as entrenched cultural norms and discriminatory political, social and economic power structures, that create vulnerability to human trafficking

ATEST recognizes that the anti-trafficking movement has at times operated in exclusionary ways. ATEST has an obligation to operate inclusively and equitably, and to create internal accountability systems to review and uphold these commitments. Our practices, culture, processes, and structure must not perpetuate marginalization.

## **Our Role as an Alliance**

ATEST offers critical non-partisan expertise to policy makers, advocating for holistic, strategic, and practical solutions. We provide a needed counterbalance to other powerful influences in the U.S. federal and state policy processes, while offering a forum and mechanism for consensus-building in the anti-trafficking community, as well as supporting the empowerment of survivor voices.

The theory of change that underpins our work is that a united coalition of anti-trafficking and human rights experts and advocates effectively injecting policy priorities, technical expertise, and vision into the political system can help shape the character and direction of legislation and policymaking on the issues of human trafficking and modern slavery.

## **ATEST Strategic Pillars**

- To promote an effective, coordinated U.S. government response to trafficking in persons in the U.S. and throughout the world by urging federal agencies to effectively implement legislative mandates and frameworks
- To increase U.S. government resources in the anti-trafficking field to address all forms of human trafficking
- To support solutions that address intersectional factors contributing to human trafficking, such as race, gender, and migration, and including ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, conflict, geo-politics, climate change, religion, trauma, sexuality, patriarchy, ableism, a lack of corporate accountability, and white supremacist ideologies and white privilege

- To drive legislation that ensures all actors, including businesses and governments, are held accountable for protecting vulnerable workers and children from severe exploitation and to protect and empower all victims of trafficking

## **Core Principles**

- ATEST advocates for a holistic and comprehensive approach to ending all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery around the world, including lasting solutions to prevent both labor and sex trafficking of people of all sexes, ages, and national origins, to hold perpetrators accountable, to ensure justice for victims, to empower survivors with tools for recovery, and to address drivers of human trafficking such as inequities and discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, citizenship, socioeconomic status, ability status, religion, and sexual orientation.
- ATEST members work both in the United States and around the world, advocating for policy solutions on domestic, transnational, and international levels.
- ATEST is a non-partisan organization that focuses on solutions that can garner support from both major parties in the United States. ATEST does not support partisan agendas or engage in electoral advocacy.
- ATEST believes that those with lived experience related to slavery and trafficking, including survivors, are integral to identifying and implementing policy solutions and have a clear stake in policy discussions. The coalition prioritizes survivor and stakeholder engagement in policy forums, and regularly collaborates with survivors and workers from communities affected by forced labor to develop and get feedback on ATEST policy priorities. We also help build the capacity of survivors to become more effective advocates and leaders in the fight to end human trafficking.
- Through its federal appropriations work, ATEST does not request earmark funding or support offsetting cuts, but rather works to expand holistic resources for all trafficking survivors and anti-trafficking initiatives and to fully fund authorized anti-trafficking programs for survivors, service providers, law enforcement partners and prevention programs. We carefully take into account protecting resources for other vulnerable populations, as all vulnerable communities are susceptible to trafficking.
- ATEST is a human rights coalition, and uses a human-rights-based, equity- and liberation-centered approach to understanding and fighting human trafficking

and modern slavery.

- ATEST advocates for a comprehensive approach, with prevention, protection, partnerships, and prosecutions as core components. This holistic approach includes public health development, foreign assistance, gender issues, human rights, and more. We strive to prioritize prevention efforts and strategic interventions based on a sophisticated understanding of the root causes of trafficking that perpetuate inequity.
- ATEST's priorities are advocacy around the Trafficking Victims Protection Act Reauthorizations ("TVPRA"), the annual appropriations process, and agency implementation focused on the TVPRA.
- Each ATEST member organization is a co-equal partner, regardless of size or funding. We act as a coalition reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve or represent, and strive to ensure that those voices are meaningfully included in discussions and decision-making.
- Trust among members of ATEST is fundamental. Members must commit to full internal transparency and honesty in all ATEST business.
- ATEST values confidentiality. Where possible, ATEST is committed to sharing information, particularly information that helps educate, advocate, and build the movement as a whole. All decisions of ATEST are considered public unless otherwise specified. At the same time, internal deliberations of ATEST are considered confidential within ATEST and members commit to honoring that confidentiality. Individual member organizations have an affirmative responsibility to share with ATEST information not subject to confidentiality obligations which has a material bearing on ATEST's projects and priorities.

## **A Vital Alliance at a Critical Time**

ATEST's work and expertise are more critical than ever. As traffickers grow more sophisticated and ruthless in their methods of exploitation, the scourge of human trafficking gains greater public awareness, and governments and communities increase their involvement in the fight to end human trafficking. It is critical to influence this growth so that it includes prevention, diversity, equity, inclusion, and liberation lenses that upend systems and policies that fuel human trafficking worldwide.

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