



February 4, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chair  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chair  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Shelby, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST), a U.S. based coalition that advocates for solutions to prevent and end all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery around the world, we are writing to urge for the following inclusions as you work to complete the final FY 2022 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Bill.

To attempt to meet the growing needs of victims and survivors, we request \$144,000,000 for human trafficking survivors and law enforcement under the Office of Justice Program's State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Victim Services Grants and Human Trafficking Task Forces account. Given the increased vulnerability to trafficking due to high unemployment rates and general financial, legal and social instability, we request that no less than \$120,000,000 of the appropriation be for victim services, and that the majority of OVC money continues to be spent supporting direct services for all forms of trafficking in persons including intensive case management, legal and shelter services. We also request that OVC review monies granted to law enforcement task forces to ensure task forces are adopting victim-centered approaches.

In 2019, the National Human Trafficking Hotline identified 11,500 potential trafficking cases in the United States, a 7.9 percent increase in identified cases since 2018. In the first 2 months of shelter-in-place orders, the Trafficking Hotline recorded a 40 percent increase in crisis cases reported compared to prior years. This trend has continued for the following months. The COVID-19 crisis has drastically changed the landscape for serving human trafficking victims and survivors. Service providers nationwide have reported a greater caseload and more difficulties providing services due to shelter-in-place orders and lockdown restrictions. As economic vulnerabilities continue to increase throughout the duration of the pandemic and economic recovery, we expect an increase in required services for victims and survivors. Despite the amplified need for comprehensive services, we anticipate a 35 percent decrease in funding for service providers in the anti-trafficking movement as part of the economic fallout from this global health crisis. We are seeing sustained unprecedented unemployment rates and significantly heightened client financial needs in all areas, including social and legal needs, and thus expect a significant increase in the need for sustained comprehensive services.



Of the \$144,000,000, we request \$10,000,000 for specialized, comprehensive, trauma-informed and gender-specific assistance to minor victims of human trafficking is critical. Minors face significant hurdles recovering from the abuse and trauma they have endured. Law enforcement has identified the lack of specialized housing programs throughout the U.S. as the greatest obstacle in effectively prosecuting child traffickers. The Attorney General is authorized to provide grant funding to serve sex-trafficked minors. We request additional funds to support services, training and outreach for labor-trafficked youth. We believe including labor trafficked children is imperative given that the federal definition of human trafficking includes both sex trafficking and forced labor.

We also request \$8,000,000 for the Civil Rights Division's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit (HTPU). HTPU houses the government's top legal experts on prosecuting human trafficking cases. These cases are resource-intensive because they are procedurally complex and involve multiple jurisdictions and defendants. Per the Human Trafficking Institute's Federal Human Trafficking Report, HTPU cases had a 100 percent conviction rate in 2019, and defendants in HTPU cases are consistently receiving longer sentences and more frequently ordered to pay restitution than non-HTPU cases. With increased funding, HTPU will be able to increase prosecutions of all forms of trafficking and forced labor.

Additionally, we request \$7,000,000 for the National Institute of Justice to create a methodology to assess the prevalence of human trafficking in the United States as mandated by Sec. 401(a) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-393). In the past, no funding has been allocated to a prevalence study in the United States. Funding provided will allow NIJ to finally conduct a prevalence study on the nature of trafficking in the United States, or more accurately, a series of prevalence studies focused on specific geographies, economic sectors, and forms of trafficking. This research is essential to inform future appropriations decisions for counter-trafficking in persons programs. The development and implementation of the methodology is estimated to cost \$7,000,000 total. Such sums necessary to complete the evaluation research and development should be appropriated for FY22.

The lack of coordinated efforts across the country to collect reliable data about trafficking means funds are appropriated and programs established without dependable information regarding the prevalence of specific types of trafficking, the locations in which trafficking occurs, and the effectiveness of anti-trafficking measures. A concerted effort to collect reliable, accurate, relevant, and impartial data is necessary to establish more effective counter-trafficking in persons programs and to more appropriately target federal funding. The study will need to include information from federal and state law enforcement alongside direct service providers in order to present a comprehensive landscape of human trafficking in the United States. Conducting pilot studies that target specific high-prevalence regions, economic sectors, and population groups is a crucial step



in developing a comprehensive and accurate prevalence methodology study; moreover, limiting the covered populations (as opposed to a national prevalence estimate) will allow the work to be conducted on a shorter timeline.

As a champion for the victims of child labor, forced labor and sex trafficking, you understand the complexities of these issues and the resources needed to respond. We have carefully vetted our requests to focus on the most important and effective programs.

We thank you for your consideration of these requests and your continued leadership.

Sincerely,

*Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST)*

*Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)*

*Free the Slaves*

*HEAL Trafficking*

*Human Trafficking Institute*

*Humanity United Action*

*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*

*Vital Voices Global Partnership*

*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.*

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