



April 4, 2022

Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chair | Honorable Tom Cole, Ranking Member
 House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Honorable Patty Murray, Chair | Honorable Roy Blunt, Ranking Member
 Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) thanks you for your leadership in the fight to end child labor, forced labor and human trafficking. We appreciate your efforts to pass legislation and provide resources to federal agencies engaged in combating these horrific crimes. Due to underlying vulnerabilities, those most at risk of, and victim to, trafficking and exploitation will experience disproportionate impacts as a result of COVID-19 in the short, medium, and long-term. With this in mind, we seek your assistance in funding essential programs in the FY 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. The number of trafficking victims significantly exceeds the availability of services at the Departments of Labor (DOL), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education (ED). ATEST recommends robust funding and accountability for programs at these key departments to fulfill the highest priority mandates of the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000* and subsequent reauthorizations (TVPA) and related legislation.

ATEST FY23 Appropriations Request Summary: LHHS				
Department	Program	FY22 Enacted	Authorized Funding	FY23 Appropriation Request
Labor	International Labor Affairs Bureau	\$96,125,000		\$168,000,000
	Employment & Training Administration			\$5,000,000 and Report Language (see below)
	Administration for Children and Families, Victim Services	\$28,755,000		\$50,000,000



Health and Human Services	Administration for Children and Families, National Human Trafficking Hotline	\$4,500,000		\$6,000,000
	Administration for Children and Families, Runaway and Homeless Youth Act	\$140,280,000		\$300,000,000 and Report Language (see below)
	Administration for Children and Families Office of Trafficking in Persons			Report Language (see below)
Education	Department of Education Grants to Local Education Agencies, Title I			\$2,000,000
	McKinney-Vento Act Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program	\$114,000,000	\$85,000,000	\$300,000,000

Department of Labor

International Labor Affairs Bureau: \$168,000,000 | We request \$168,000,000 for the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) in the Department of Labor (DOL). Specifically, we request \$27,000,000 for the administration of ILAB, \$70,000,000 for the Child Labor and Forced Labor program, \$48,000,000 for Workers’ Rights Programs, and \$23,000,000 for program evaluation.

ILAB is an essential part of the U.S. government’s international response to forced labor, human trafficking, and child labor. It is responsible for implementing Section 105(b)(2) of the TVPRA of 2005 (P.L.109-164) and Section 110 of the TVPRA of 2008 (P.L.110-457). In the past, these requirements have not been funded. Funding provided would allow ILAB to fulfill its Congressional mandates including: producing annual findings on worst forms of child labor in certain U.S. trade beneficiary countries; the development and maintenance of a list of goods produced by child or forced labor, including inputs to goods made with child or forced labor; and increased responsibilities in enforcing the U.S. Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA). Adequate funding will ensure that staff is able to travel to the countries with which ILAB has partnered or where important research is needed to accurately maintain the list of goods made with forced labor or child labor. In addition, a robust and expertly staffed entity within the U.S. government’s foreign



policy establishment – that sits outside of the diplomatic constraints of the State Department and focuses particularly on worker rights – is tremendously important to the government’s ability to tackle human trafficking and address the underlying factors that place individuals at risk of trafficking.

We request \$48,000,000 for Workers’ Rights Programs because they are essential to maintaining coherence with the U.S. trade agenda. ILAB provides technical assistance to countries on a variety of worker rights issues, many of which correspond directly to labor rights commitments under trade agreements. Project goals include adopting or reforming labor laws or standards, improving labor inspectorates’ enforcement capacity, increasing awareness of fundamental labor rights, and improving occupational safety and health conditions. ILAB also provides technical advice and other support to labor ministries through workshops and exchange programs and hones in on areas of particular concern including the cocoa and fishing sectors as well as other supply chains with heightened risks of child labor or forced labor.

Employment and Training Administration: \$5,000,000 | The Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA) should conduct a review of all employment readiness, training, and other discretionary programs, and revise program guidance as needed to explicitly include eligibility for trafficking victims where possible, per Sec. 107(b) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (P.L. 106-386). The requested funds should be used to develop and implement a pilot grant program to deliver trauma-informed employment and training services that address particular barriers to service, and challenges to finding employment, faced by survivors of human trafficking. The U.S Advisory Council on Human Trafficking highlighted the need to provide access to employment and training programs to all survivors of human trafficking. In their inaugural report, released in 2016, the council noted that “...after leaving their trafficking situations, survivors [...] can find it difficult to live financially independent. Career development programs help survivors become self-sufficient and provide for their families. When survivors are employed, it positively affects their lives and prevents dependence on public benefits.” We also recommend that the DOL integrate training to identify potential signs of trafficking and referral options as a regular activity for State Farmworker Monitor Advocates, and during the provision of relevant services to particular at-risk populations, including through the Youth Build, Job Corps and Reentry Employment Opportunity programs.

Employment and Training Administration: Report Language | Labor trafficking affects both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals working across many industries, most commonly domestic work, agriculture, manufacturing, janitorial services, hotel services, construction, health and elder care, hair and nail salons, and strip club dancing. DOL needs resources to protect and support victims, particularly with much needed skills training and job placement services, as well as providing referrals to shelter, medical care, mental health services, legal services, and case management. ATEST members have also worked with human trafficking survivors who were forced to engage in criminal acts of labor, including forced activities related to gangs, weapons and narcotics. Victims impacted by this form of labor trafficking also require additional legal services in the realms of criminal law and immigration.



Proposed Report Language: *The Committee encourages the Employment and Training Administration to increase access and eligibility to employment and training services for survivors of all forms of human trafficking as required by Sec. 107(b) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (P.L. 106-386). The Committee also encourages the development and integration of training to identify potential signs of trafficking and referral options as a regular activity for State Farmworker Monitor Advocates, and during the provision of relevant services to particular at-risk populations, including through the Youth Build, Job Corps and Reentry Employment Opportunity programs. The Committee also encourages the Department to continue and expand its pilot initiative to develop and support networks of service providers in collaboration with HHS and DOJ.*

Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families, Victim Services (ACF): \$50,000,000 | ACF fulfills mandates of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act to 1) Identify and serve victims who are foreign nationals; and 2) Create specialized case management programs to assist U.S. citizen victims. The number of trafficking victims certified as needing comprehensive, trauma-informed, gender-specific services has risen dramatically but funding for services has not kept pace. Additionally, funding increases for victim services programs under HHS have never matched the increases provided to programs under DOJ. Both programs are essential to effectively assist victims and survivors and we encourage parity in funding for both programs. While HHS departments have worked efficiently with limited resources to support service providers, further funding would allow HHS to fulfill legislated and related needs of victims more fully. We encourage ACF to use a portion of increased funding for legal services for victims. We request that increased funds be utilized equally for services for both foreign national victims and U.S. citizen and legal permanent resident victims, consistent with demonstrated need.

Service providers across the country have noted a significant increase in the services required by victims and survivors during the COVID-19 crisis. Data from one ATEST member organization providing services showed a 556 percent increase in emergency response cases to escaping survivors since 2019 at the start of the pandemic. Furthermore, this service provider has experienced a 455 percent increase in costs for basic necessities. A survey conducted by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (the “OSCE ODIHR Survey”) confirms the increased needs of service providers to effectively assist victims during the pandemic. The crisis has heightened vulnerabilities to exploitation and required providers to work with limited resources to provide expanded services. We have seen unprecedented unemployment rates and significantly heightened client financial needs in all areas. Both trafficking victims currently receiving services and those newly seeking services have shown an increased need for direct assistance to pay for basic necessities like food and shelter. With the pandemic impacting employment opportunities in all industries where human trafficking survivors have formerly sought employment and stability, we expect a significant increase in the coming years in the need for sustained comprehensive services for all survivors for longer periods of time. Specifically, data from the National Human



Trafficking Hotline showed that in April 2020, the number of crisis trafficking situations increased by more than 40 percent and the number of situations in which people needed immediate emergency shelter nearly doubled. We therefore request an increase in funds in FY 2023 to \$50,000,000, which will help keep up with the expected needs of trafficking victims and their family members. Relatedly, we also request that any portion of these funds that currently operate under a match requirement are exempted from the 25 percent non-federal funding match requirement for FY 2023.

Administration for Children and Families, the National Human Trafficking Hotline: \$6,000,000 | The National Human Trafficking Hotline (“Trafficking Hotline”) is a toll-free 24/7 center available to answer calls, text messages, online tips and email queries. The Trafficking Hotline connects victims with anti-trafficking services in their area (such as shelter, case management, and legal services), collects tips on human trafficking cases, and, where appropriate, reports actionable tips to law enforcement. The Trafficking Hotline serves both domestic and foreign victims inside the U.S. In FY 2021, the National Human Trafficking Hotline received 13,450 signals from victims and survivors themselves, a 26 percent increase from FY 2019. The significant increase in signals from victims and survivors underscores what an important and trusted resource the hotline has become for people experiencing trafficking.

As efforts to increase awareness, training, and education of the public and key industries on human trafficking generally and the National Human Trafficking Hotline specifically have succeeded, call volume on the hotline has increased thirty-fold since its inception in 2007. From FY 2019 to FY 2021 the hotline has experienced a whopping 60 percent increase in total signal volume. Given the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on social, economic, and health outcomes, call volume will continue to steadily increase throughout FY 2023 and beyond. We request \$6,000,000 in FY 2023 to support the National Human Trafficking Hotline to continue to meet the needs of victims and survivors of human trafficking.

Administration for Children and Families, Runaway and Homeless Youth Act: \$300,000,000 | We request a total of \$300,000,000 for ACF to implement the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) programs, Title III of the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Act. This is the amount to be included in the most recently introduced bill to fully reauthorize RHYA, the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act of 2021. RHYA programs have been chronically underfunded since its inception, despite these programs costing less than other systems that many youth experiencing homelessness and survivors of trafficking encounter. Everyone should have the opportunity to succeed regardless of their start in life, but young people who are trafficked and youth experiencing homelessness are not plugged into the networks, resources, and supports they need for healthy development.

RHYA programs prevent trafficking, identify survivors, and provide housing and services to runaway, homeless, and disconnected youth. RHYA has been a necessary bridge for our youth, but more recently, it has supported us to meet the unprecedented need for safe and stable housing and supportive services for homeless youth. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased



children and youth homelessness due to high unemployment, unstable living conditions, and job insecurity. Some of our sites, such as Covenant House Missouri, saw their waiting lists double.

In a typical year, 4.2 million young people (ages 13-25) experience homelessness annually, including 700,000 unaccompanied youth ages 13 to 17. Recent data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline also show that being a runaway homeless youth and living in unstable housing are two of the top risk factors for human trafficking. Numerous studies have found trafficking rates among youth experiencing homelessness ranging from 19 percent to 40 percent. Using the lower end estimate means that about 800,000 of the youth and young adults who experience homelessness in a year are also victims of sex trafficking or forced labor in cities, suburbs, rural communities, and American Indian Reservations across the country.

The cost of not investing in the lives of youth experiencing homelessness is an economic burden that affects the young person, taxpayers, and society. Researchers have found that taxpayers face an estimated lump sum 2011 fiscal cost per youth of \$248,182 and social cost of \$613,182.¹ Taking the modest taxpayer² cost of \$248,182 per youth and applying it to *only half* of the 4.2 million youth who experience homelessness every year in America, the taxpayer cost is over \$521 billion (2.1 million x \$248,182). Through increased investments, all youth in need of safe and stable housing and supportive services will be able to connect to the networks of support and resources needed to stabilize, heal, and thrive. These connected youth in turn become part of the solution to trafficking and homelessness and contribute to the community's well-being.

RHYA has provided base funding to communities across the country to develop community-based responses to youth and young adult homelessness and trafficking. These local systems of care are based on the unique needs of each region, their available resources, and local priorities. When we support young people experiencing homelessness, we prevent trafficking. RHYA programs are also trained in identifying and serving survivors of trafficking. Specifically, RHYA funds: emergency shelters, family reunification when safe, aftercare, street outreach, education, employment training, behavioral and mental health care, transitional housing, and independent housing options. This support achieves the following successful outcomes for youth: 1) safe exit from homelessness and hopelessness; 2) family reunification and/or establishment of permanent connections in their communities; 3) education, employment, and sustainable independence; and 4) prevention of human trafficking. Further, these programs are best positioned to prevent trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation and provide early identification of and services to youth victims of crimes.

¹ Foldes, Steven S. and Lubov, Andrea. (2015) The Economic Burden of Youth Experiencing Homelessness and the Financial Case for Investing in Interventions to Change Peoples' Lives: An Estimate of the Short-and Long-Term Costs to Taxpayers and Society in Hennepin County, Minnesota.

<https://www.youthlinkmn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/the-economic-burden-of-homeless-youth-in-hennepin-county.pdf>

Social cost is defined as the total costs to society including lost earnings, lost tax payments, public crime expenditures, victim costs, welfare support programs, education, excess tax burden and public housing support.

² Belfield, et. al., The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth. January 2012



Proposed Report Language: *The Committee strongly encourages programs to have the ability to serve youth involved in other systems (such as child welfare and juvenile justice) that are not currently housed by that system.*

Administration for Children and Families, Office of Trafficking in Persons: Report Language | In establishing the Office of Trafficking in Persons (OTIP), HHS underscored the importance of coordinating trafficking efforts across the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). ACF works directly with all victims of human trafficking – men, women, children, LGBTQ, foreign nationals and domestic clients – and the diverse needs and vulnerabilities of these populations can only be met by an effective coordinating body networked agency-wide. Additionally, the ongoing migration flows and refugee crises that swelled in scope around 2015 and have continued further highlight the need to develop responsible and robust parameters to ensure that unaccompanied minors working with ACF and the Office of Refugee Resettlement are not released to families or guardians who further exploit these vulnerable youth. Unaccompanied minors released to guardians after being identified as a victim of or at risk of human trafficking continue to report to service providers that they are exploited or labor/sex trafficked by those to whom they were entrusted. We also expect that the United States may well accept unaccompanied minors from Ukraine within the next year, and we strongly encourage ACF and ORR to implement and enforce strong protections for these youth to prevent re-trafficking or new forms of exploitation.

Proposed Report Language: *Within the funds provided, the Committee encourages ACF to hire sufficient full-time employees to support the Office of Trafficking in Persons and coordinate trafficking efforts across ACF. Furthermore, these funds should be used to develop robust and effective protective mechanisms to ensure that unaccompanied minors processed through the Office of Refugee Resettlement are not further exploited or trafficked by the guardians or families to whom they are entrusted after their release.*

Administration for Children and Families, Family Youth Services Bureau: Report Language The process of informing RHYA grantees has restricted the ways in which service providers are able to continue to provide services to vulnerable youth. For the past several years, RHYA grantees have been notified whether they will receive a grant or not within one day before a grant period is to begin. This lack of sufficient notice is extremely problematic for agencies and community-based organizations working to serve runaway and homeless youth who face higher risks of trafficking and violence. We recommend that the current bureaucratic process be streamlined, so that RHYA grant applicants are notified regarding whether they will receive a grant or not within at least three months in advance of the start date of a grant.

Proposed Report Language: *When awarding funds under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act program, the Secretary shall notify all applicants if they were successful or not at least 30 days before the grant is to begin as well as 30 days before an existing grant is set to end.*



Department of Education

Department of Education Grants to Local Education Agencies, Title I: \$2,000,000 | The Department of Education interfaces with approximately 50 million elementary and secondary school children each year, placing it in a unique position to identify victims of sex trafficking and forced labor and to prevent the victimization and exploitation of children who might be susceptible. While ED has been able to create some resources for educators without any dedicated federal resources, dedicated funding for the prevention of child trafficking is essential. The funds should be used to develop materials regarding all forms of human trafficking, including sex trafficking and forced labor, to ensure that educators and students are aware of how to identify and address all types of trafficking. Further, we request that ED publish a white paper examining the appropriate role of educators and students, as well as the role of the education system, in preventing, identifying, and supporting child trafficking victims. The outcome of the white paper should inform the development of a model curriculum on the prevention of both sex trafficking and forced labor.

McKinney-Vento Act Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (EHCY): \$300,000,000 | The EHCY removes barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and opportunity for success for homeless children and youth; all of whom are at high risk of human trafficking. The EHCY is effective in addressing youth homelessness. With the support of EHCY grants, local education agencies have provided identification, enrollment and transportation assistance, as well as academic support and referrals for basic services. Unfortunately, the resources directed to child and youth homelessness programs have not been sufficient in recent years. ED reported that during the 2017-2018 school year, public schools identified 1.5 million homeless children and youth, a 15 percent increase over the 3 previous school years. However, only 22 percent of school districts receive support through the EHCY in any given year. As a result, homeless children and youth are under-identified and continue to face significant barriers to school enrollment and continuity.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act's EHCY, all school districts are required to designate a homeless liaison, who proactively identifies homeless children and youth and connects them with vital resources, including food, housing, and clothing. Because all school districts—even those in communities without youth shelters—must designate a liaison for homeless students, schools are uniquely positioned to identify youth who are being trafficked, or are at risk of being trafficked, and provide connections to services. Yet many liaisons are designated in name only and lack the time and the training to carry out their duties. This lack of capacity is particularly severe in light of the increase in student homelessness due to the COVID-19 crisis. Increasing funding for the EHCY will support a dedicated infrastructure within the nation's public schools to identify and serve children and youth who are at very high risk of human trafficking, both during the current public health and economic crisis and as the economy is rebuilt.

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. If you have any questions, please contact ATEST Director Terry FitzPatrick (terry.fitzpatrick@ATEST-US.org).

Sincerely,

Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST)

Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)

Covenant House

Free the Slaves

HEAL Trafficking

Human Trafficking Institute

Human Trafficking Legal Center

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.