



## Congress Passes, President Signs Partial Reauthorization of Trafficking Victims Protection Act

WASHINGTON – President Joe Biden this week signed two bills passed in December during the final days of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress to reauthorize portions of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). ATEST applauds enactment of these bipartisan measures and calls on the current Congress to complete critical elements of TVPA reauthorization without delay.

The two bills signed Thursday are [S. 3946](#), sponsored by Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), and [S. 3949](#), sponsored by Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). ATEST endorsed both bills. They include important new initiatives and funding authorizations:

- Dedicated staff and funding at the FBI and Department of Homeland Security for specialized investigation teams to focus on labor trafficking
- Funding increases to enforce Tariff Act provisions that prohibit the importation of goods made through forced or child labor
- Those who "attempt or conspire" to benefit from trafficking can be held liable for civil damages
- Traffickers can't escape paying restitution to survivors by filing bankruptcy
- Elimination of the sunset for the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, a panel comprised of individuals with lived experience
- Training for all federal workers on trafficking and establishment of codes of conduct at all agencies to prohibit trafficking
- Pilot program on preventing trafficking of highly vulnerable rural youth
- Comptroller General study on compliance with rules that ban human trafficking in federal supply chains
- Greater transparency on federal expenditures to combat trafficking by requiring the open publication by each agency of their annual anti-trafficking spending
- GAO study on availability of mental health and substance abuse services for survivors
- Sense of Congress that all large companies should have an anti-trafficking trafficking policy, to include a prohibition of deceptive labor recruiting practices

ATEST is disappointed that two other key bills did not receive final congressional approval in 2022. They are [H.R. 6552](#), sponsored by Representatives Chris Smith (R-NJ), Karen Bass (D-CA) and Michael McCaul (R-TX), and [S. 4171](#), sponsored by Bob Menendez (D-NJ), James Risch (R-ID), Tim Kaine (D-VA), and Marco Rubio (R-FL). Both of these bills were also endorsed by ATEST. H.R. 6552 passed the House with an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 401 to 20. S. 4171 passed the Senate by unanimous bipartisan consent.

Overlapping provisions in these bills were not resolved before the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress ended, and the bills did not receive final approval. This leaves serious gaps in TVPA reauthorization, including:

- Funding for trafficking victim programs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Funding to operate the National Human Trafficking Hotline
- Funding for the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in persons, which creates annual Trafficking in Persons Report, runs the President's Interagency Task Force on Human Trafficking and the Senior Policy Operating Group to coordinate anti-trafficking programs across federal agencies, runs the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, and provides grants that support governmental and civil society anti-trafficking programs around the world

The two unpassed bills also included significant new policies, including:

- Integrating anti-trafficking strategies into all aid and humanitarian assistance programs run by the U.S. Agency for International Development
- Strengthening protections for domestic workers brought to the U.S. by diplomats and workers at international institutions
- Championing of anti-trafficking assessments and mitigation measures when considering the approval of loans by multilateral development banks

ATEST thanks the many House and Senate members and staffers for their tireless efforts in 2022 to reauthorize portions of the TVPA. We look forward to lending our alliance's energy and expertise in ensuring that the act is fully reauthorized as soon as possible in 2023.

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. We advocate for lasting solutions to prevent forced labor and sex trafficking, hold perpetrators accountable, ensure justice for victims, and empower survivors with tools for recovery. Our collective experience implementing programs at home and abroad provides our coalition an unparalleled breadth and depth of expertise.

ATEST member organizations include: 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 (HUA), McCain Institute for International Leadership, National Network for Youth (NN4Y), Polaris, Safe Horizon, Solidarity Center, United Way Worldwide Center to Combat Human Trafficking, Verité, and Vital Voices Global Partnership.

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