



To: House & Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Commerce, Science, Justice and Related Agencies
From: Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST)
Date: March 13, 2026
Re: FY27 Recommendations for Anti-trafficking Programs

The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) thanks you for your leadership in the fight to end forced labor and human trafficking. We are grateful for the support these programs have received for more than 25 years, when Congress first passed the blueprint for America's anti-trafficking response, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

Human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing criminal industries in the world, affecting 28 million people and generating more than \$236 billion in annual illicit profits. It is more than a criminal justice issue, it affects America's economy and national security. We can eradicate trafficking only by dedicating the necessary resources.

This memo provides concrete Justice Department recommendations from ATEST, a nonpartisan coalition of leading anti-trafficking organizations working throughout the United States and around the world. ATEST urges Congress to hold the line in FY27 by appropriating not less than the amounts enacted for FY26, and approve increases where possible to meet actual need.

The Justice Department plays a vital role in bringing traffickers to justice. These cases are often complicated and involve lengthy legal proceedings requiring additional resources for prosecutors as well as for victims. To help survivors navigate the court process, they require comprehensive case management and legal services, health and mental health services, and housing – supported by trauma-informed and culturally-competent victim service programs and community-based organizations.

Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime: To meet the growing needs of law enforcement and victims/survivors, ATEST recommends not less than the FY26 appropriation of \$83,500,000; but we further recommend the committee consider restoring the appropriation to the previously-enacted level of \$88,000,000. Meeting actual need would warrant an increase to not less than \$140,000,000 for adult trafficking plus \$12,000,000 for minors. Given the vulnerability survivors face through financial, legal and social instability, we recommend no less than 85% of the appropriation be for victim services, including intensive case management, legal services and shelter services. While housing needs remain one of the biggest resource scarcities for human trafficking victims, service provider funding must be comprehensive and meaningfully address food insecurity, the need for clothing,

medical, dental and mental health care and treatment, and financial instability from un/under-employment. This funding is crucial to building and deepening relationships between victim service providers and law enforcement officials. ATEST recommends that committee report language direct DOJ to publish notices of funding opportunities for civil society organizations within the first 120 days of the new fiscal year and ensure all funds are awarded by the end of the same fiscal year to avoid gaps in service delivery.

Legal Activities, Civil Rights Division, Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit: HTPU houses the government's top legal experts on prosecuting human trafficking and ATEST recommends an appropriation of not less than \$8,000,000. These cases are resource-intensive because they are procedurally complex and frequently involve multiple jurisdictions and defendants. The Abolish Human Trafficking Act (P.L. 115-392) provides that the Attorney General designates at least one Assistant U.S. Attorney as a Human Trafficking Justice Coordinator in each Federal judicial district, who works with a human trafficking witness specialist to prosecute perpetrators, ensure collection of data, and encourage the collection of restitution for human trafficking victims. HTPU is responsible for ongoing training of these prosecutors.

National Institute of Justice, Prevalence Methodology & Study: We recommend not less than \$7,000,000 for NIJ to continue research and develop methodologies to assess the prevalence of human trafficking in the United States, as mandated by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-393 Sec. 401(a)). Funding will allow NIJ to research specific geographies, economic sectors, and different forms of trafficking. The value of prevalence studies lies in the ability of policymakers and researchers to correlate changes in prevalence to changes in policies and interventions. This research is essential to inform future appropriations decisions.

Federal Bureau of Investigation: ATEST recommends not less than \$2,000,000 for the FBI to establish a team of not less than 10 agents to specialize exclusively in the investigation of labor trafficking violations, as authorized by the Abolish Trafficking Reauthorization Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-347 Section 406 (a)). The presence of the FBI in trafficking investigations significantly increases the chances of success. With trafficking investigations often crossing state lines, the FBI becomes critical. Federal law enforcement efforts have focused too heavily on sex trafficking, leaving those trafficked on farms, in factories, restaurants and hotels; at mines and construction sites; and in private homes as domestic and home health care workers without adequate law enforcement protection. The congressionally-mandated FBI labor trafficking team is a critical step to correct this imbalance.

As a champion for the victims of trafficking, you understand the complexities of these issues and the resources needed to respond. We thank you for your consideration and your continued leadership. If you have any questions, please contact ATEST Director Terry FitzPatrick (terry.fitzpatrick@atest-us.org or 571-282-9913).