

May 20, 2011

Chairman Senator Patrick J. Leahy
433 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Senator Chuck E. Grassley
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and the hundreds of thousands of children at-risk for commercial sexual exploitation each year, we urge you to pass out of committee S.596 "Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Deterrence and Victims Support Act of 2011." We applaud Senator Ron Wyden and Senator John Cornyn as well as their co-sponsors Senators Brown (MA), Brown (OH), Cantwell, Harkin, Klobuchar, Kyl, Merkley, and Schumer. Their bipartisan leadership demonstrates the critical need for a national response to child sex trafficking.

This legislation will provide crucial funding to develop and enhance collaborative local efforts to address the sex trafficking of children in the U.S. Each year, an estimated 100,000 children are exploited through prostitution in the United States. They are sold in motels, strip clubs, on the streets and on the internet, and even from their own homes by parents or guardians. Runaway and homeless boys and girls are especially at-risk. Unfortunately, few services are available to help children stabilize and recover.

S.596 aims to address these issues by:

- Requiring grantees to have a multidisciplinary plan to include services and shelter for victims, special training for law enforcement and service providers, and a plan for deterring and prosecuting sex trafficking offenses. This comprehensive approach is crucial to fully addressing child sex trafficking.
- Providing 6 block grants of \$2.0 to \$2.5 million each, spread out regionally so that every part of the U.S. can develop an appropriate safe place for victims to recover, rebuild their lives, and stay free from exploitation. Funds can also support law enforcement and training.
- Requiring improvements to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system. The NCIC system is used by federal, state and local law enforcement to track information about missing, exploited and runaway children. It also requires that state welfare agencies notify the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children whenever a child is reported missing from a foster care family or childcare institution.

More cases of child sex trafficking are being reported than ever before. In July, a California grand jury indicted 39 defendants on federal charges ranging from sex trafficking of children and child pornography to racketeering. The indictment found that over a four year period 16 underage girls were sold for sex by individuals involved with the Crips gang of Oceanside, California. In November, 29 people were indicted in Tennessee for an alleged sex trafficking ring where Somali criminal gangs forced girls under 14 years old into prostitution in Tennessee, Minnesota, and Ohio. In late 2010, Operation Cross Country V rescued 69 exploited children in a three-day national law enforcement action spanning 40 cities.

In all but a few localities, children rescued in cases like these have nowhere to turn. Law enforcement identifying a sex trafficked child have nowhere to place that child that offers a safe and appropriate environment. Sex trafficked

children suffer intense needs including: post-traumatic stress, depression, chronic illness, substance addiction, STDs and suicidal ideation. Many do not have a stable family to return to for comfort and safety. The ramifications of this lack of resources are tragic; children end up in the juvenile justice system or back on the streets with their trafficker. In either case, the cycle goes on, at high cost to taxpayers and immeasurable cost to the child.

Finally, due to a lack of law enforcement resources, criminal gangs and other traffickers continue to offend with little risk. Many are turning to selling children instead of or in addition to engaging in other criminal behavior. The cost-benefit equation is compelling: a child costs nothing to acquire, can be sold countless times, and brings in an annual profit of roughly \$75,000 per year, tax-free and with little overhead, to a trafficker. Perhaps most striking of all, there is nearly endless demand.

We can and must do better. We urge you to support S.596 and pass it from committee as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Change.org

Norma Ramos, Executive Director, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW)

Covenant House

Darkness to Light

ECPAT-USA, Inc.

FAIR Fund, Inc.

International Justice Mission

Justice & Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ

Justice Response/Vineyard Anti-Slavery Team

Mark P. Lagon, MSFS International Relations Chair, Georgetown University & Former Ambassador at Large to Combat Trafficking in Persons, U.S. Department of State

Living Waters International Women's Ministry

Love146

The National Crittenton Foundation

National Multicultural Institute

Polaris Project

Project Liberty

Rebecca Project for Human Rights

Sensibilities Prevention Services

Soroptimist International of the Americas

Linda Smith (U.S. Congress 1994-98), Founder and President, Shared Hope International

The Somaly Mam Foundation

TraffickStop

WITNESS

Women at Risk, International

State and Local Organizations

Arizonans for the Protection of Exploited Children and Adults (APECA), AZ

StreetLight, AZ

Alameda Family Services, CA

Sharmin Bock, Assistant District Attorney, Alameda County District Attorney's Office, H.E.A.T. Watch Program, CA

Crittenton Services for Children & Families, CA

Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting and Serving Sexually Exploited Youth (MISSEY), CA

WestCoast Children's Clinic, CA

Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, CT

International Institute of Connecticut, Project Rescue, Anti-Human Trafficking Program, CT

The Paul & Lisa Program, Inc., CT

Stanwich Congregational Church, CT

YWCA Hartford Region, CT

Tina Frundt, Founder of Courtney's House & Sex Trafficking Survivor, DC

DC Stop Modern Slavery, DC

Center for Family and Child Enrichment, Inc., FL
His House Children's Home, FL
Kristi House, FL
Women's Fund of Miami-Dade, FL
Alliance for Change Through Treatment, GA
Atlanta Center for Healing, GA
DeKalb Task Force for Runaway, Homeless and Sexually Exploited Youth, GA
Juvenile Justice Fund/A Future. Not a Past., GA
The Young Adult Guidance Center, Inc., GA
Street GRACE, Inc., GA
Wellspring Living, Inc., GA
Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE), IL
Prologue, Inc., IL
Anti-Sexual Exploitation Roundtable for Community Action (ASERCA), KS
Florence Crittenton Services of Topeka, Inc., KS
My Life My Choice, MA
The Hope Project, Inc., MI
Jewish Women's Foundation of Metropolitan Detroit, MI
Junior League of Kalamazoo Michigan, MI
Michigan Rescue and Restore Coalition (MIRRC), MI
Michigan Women's Foundation & Michigan's A Future. Not a Past, MI
Ozone House Youth and Family Services, MI
Vista Maria, MI
West Michigan SSTREAM, MI
The Advocates for Human Rights, MN
Division of Indian Work, MN
Domestic Abuse Project, MN
The Family Partnership/PRIDE Program, MN
Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, MN
Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center, MN
Women's Foundation of Minnesota, MN
Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition (CMSHTC), MO

Youth in Need, MO
Hope House, NC
The HEAAT Foundation, Inc., NJ
Community Treatment Solutions, NJ
Greater New Jersey Annual Conference United Methodist Women, NJ
The Junior Leagues of New Jersey, NJ
Commonwealth Health Center – Medical Social Services Department, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Karidat Social Services – Guma' Esperansa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Marianas Health Services – Pacific Wellness Center, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Pacesetters International dba IMPACT, NV
Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services, NY
Farmworker Legal Services of NY, Inc., NY
Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS), NY
Rahab's Hideaway, OH
Representative Carolyn Tomei, Oregon State Representative, House District 41, OR
Coalition of Advocates for Equal Access for Girls, OR
Janus Youth Programs, OR
Office of Multnomah County Commissioner Diane McKeel, District 4, OR
Oregon Commission for Women, OR
Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force, OR
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR), PA
Operation Broken Silence, TN
Second Life of Chattanooga, TN
Richmond Justice Initiative, VA
Students Stopping the Trafficking of People (SSTOP), VA
Virginia Coalition Against Human Trafficking, VA
VA to Stop Modern Slavery, VA
Give Way to Freedom, VT
Washington Anti-Trafficking Engagement, WA
YouthCare, WA