**OP-ED SAMPLE TEMPLATE**

HIGHLIGHTED TEXT = TEXT TO PERSONALIZE

[INSERT A FEW SENTENCES ABOUT YOURSELF, HOW YOU LEARNED ABOUT THE ISSUE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO DO SOMETHING MORE TO FIGHT IT. WHY DID YOU SIGN UP TO MEET WITH A POLICYMAKER?] But most of all, it opened my eyes to the amount of influence a community’s voice carries in speaking to their elected official. Especially when speaking out against an issue that has existed throughout the centuries—slavery. According to the International Labour Organization, there are 21 million people who are enslaved today.

While we recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream Speech”, we must acknowledge that the egregious crime of slavery is still present—both here in our backyard and abroad. Today, we have the privilege of reflecting on the milestones previous abolitionists have reached, as well as the opportunity and choice to move forward in their footsteps.

During the month of August, Congress went on recess, returning to their districts to hear from their constituents about the issues that were of highest importance to those in their district. I had the opportunity to meet with [NAME OF MEMBER OF CONGRESS]’s office here in [CITY], to ask for [HIS/HER] his leadership on a bill called the Human Trafficking Prioritization Act, which would bolster the U.S. government’s efforts to combat human trafficking around the world and has strong bipartisan support in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. I was one of over 400 people from all 50 states who attended meetings to ask their policymakers to take action on this issue.

The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons is the locus of the U.S. government’s expertise on international human trafficking. The Human Trafficking Prioritization Act ensures this office a seat at the table in important foreign policy discussions by elevating its status to bureau-level within the State Department—without costing taxpayers a dime. This two-page bill is small but essential to making certain that the voices of the most powerless in our world—the victims of modern-day slavery—are heard in the halls of power in our country.

It is vital that our community shows its support for this bipartisan effort in Congress, and that [NAME OF YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS] represents us by cosponsoring this bill when Congress returns to Washington this week. [INSERT CLOSING SENTENCE. YOU CAN REFER BACK TO WHY YOU PERSONALLY CARE THAT THIS HAPPEN, SOMETHING YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CONGRESSMAN (MAYBE FROM YOUR IN-DISTRICT MEETING). REMEMBER: KEEP THE MESSAGE POSITIVE!] As we reflect on the milestones in the historic fight against slavery, let us continue to be a country that stands and fights for freedom.