

Dear Congressman/Senator:

We are writing to express our strong support for legislation that would enhance the United States anti-trafficking policy by upgrading the State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to a State Department Bureau. We represent members of both the current and previous President Advisory Council on Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. As members of the current President's Advisory Council, we studied the issue of domestic and international trafficking for most of the past year and issued a report with recommendations to President Obama. One of the recommendations was to upgrade the Office to a Bureau.

Our April 2013 Report states: "The Council appreciates and acknowledges not only the diplomacy and monitoring carried out by J/TIP, but the level of expertise and innovation the Office brings to the anti-trafficking movement. This Council believes that it is vitally important that the State Department's J/TIP be elevated to a State Department Bureau, on equal footing with the Regional Bureaus and other priority issues for this Administration. Making J/TIP a Bureau would improve collaboration with the Regional Bureaus, Embassies, and international interlocutors."

We are grateful that legislation has been introduced in the House and Senate to upgrade the Office to a State Department Bureau headed by an Assistant Secretary of State. This simple redesignation, which does not involve additional bureaucracy or expense, will give J/TIP and its leadership access to the Secretary of State and parity with regional Assistant Secretaries. This upgrade is required for the issue of slavery eradication to receive the attention it requires.

As leaders of faith based and community organizations, we respectfully urge you to support this legislation, which sharpens the United States' most precious diplomatic tool. The men and women who staff and lead the J/TIP Office are the nation's leading experts on modern day slavery. While we understand that anti-trafficking concerns will sometimes be preempted by other U.S. interests, we believe that it is essential that J/TIP's leadership have a seat at the table where key decisions on diplomacy and strategy are being developed and implemented.

We respectfully urge you to support H.R. 2283, "The Human Trafficking Prioritization Act," sponsored by Rep. Chris Smith in the House and S. 1249, companion legislation in the Senate that is sponsored by Senator Richard Blumenthal.

For information, please contact Allison Hollobaugh in the office of Congressman Chris Smith and Joel Cohen in the Office of Senator Richard Blumenthal.

Sincerely,

Leith Anderson, President, National Association of Evangelicals

Angela Glover Blackwell, Founder and CEO, Policy Link

Bishop Mark Hanson, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in American

Lynne Hybels, Co-founder, Willow Creek Community Church

The Most Rev. Dr. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop, Episcopal Church

Miaohong Hsiangju Liu, Buddha's Light International Association

Maria Nagorski, Executive Director, Fair Chance DC

Rabbi Julie Schonfeld, Executive Vice-President, Rabbinical Assembly

Barbara Williams Skinner, President, Skinner Leadership Institute

Elder Steven Snow, First Quorum of the Seventy, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Susan K. Stern, Chair, President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships

Archbishop Demetrios Trakatellis, Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Sister Marlene Weisenbeck, Past President, Leadership Council of Women Religious

Reverend Elder Nancy L. Wilson, Moderator, Metropolitan Community Churches

Rev. Noel Castellanos, CEO, Christian Community Development Association (CCDA)

Dr. Arturo Chavez, President, Mexican American Catholic College

The Reverend Canon Peg Chamberlin, Immediate Past President, National Council of Churches of Christ-USA

Fred Davie, Executive Vice President, Union Theological Seminary

Dr. Joel C. Hunter, Senior Pastor of Northland, A Church Distributed

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, Bishop, African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church

Nancy Ratzan, Immediate Past President, National Council of Jewish Women

Rabbi David Saperstein, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Jim Wallis, President and CEO, Sojourners

The Reverend Dr. Sharon E. Watkins, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada

**Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only*