

#ListenToSurvivors

February 23, 2015

Senator Chuck Grassley, Chair
U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

Senator Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Diane Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510

Senator John Cornyn
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Amy Klobuchar
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Grassley, Leahy, Feinstein, Cornyn, and Klobuchar:

We write to you, the leaders of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, and to three committee Senators who have been particularly sensitive to our (often ignored) perspective. **We write to you as survivors of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.** We write as survivors who know, profoundly and personally, the harm caused by this crime. And we write to you as survivor leaders of organizations trying to prevent sex trafficking before it victimizes others.

We write to express our support for legislation that makes progress in three essential areas:

1. **Identify new funding streams for victim services.** Current public budgets are stressed. Victims of sex trafficking typically suffer multiple harms, requiring a range of services from medical and psychological assistance to treatment for the drug and alcohol addiction that so often accompanies trafficking (addictions that make people vulnerable to trafficking; addictions that develop or worsen as people try to cope with the pain of this intimate form of abuse). We've been told by law enforcement in numerous jurisdictions that when services don't exist (mainly because they are expensive) there's a disincentive to enforcing anti-trafficking laws and identifying victims.

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The *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act* (JVTA), S 178, is innovative for creating a new fund to finance victim services—an essential goal. It also achieves a second principle we stand for: **Making sex buyers accountable for the harm they cause.**

2. **Prevent sex trafficking by targeting the buyers who create demand.** Logically, trafficking will never end until we shrink the demand that creates the market. People still in the life, still being exploited, sometimes avoid this conclusion because they see no other options but the cycle of violence in which they are trapped. We are strong witnesses to the necessity of making the buyers pay, to make the crime end.

Two bills in particular strength accountability in the sex trafficking legal regime: S178 and [Combat Human Trafficking Act of 2015](#), S140. By clarifying congressional intent that sex buyers be considered parties to the trafficking crime, by compelling the Department of Justice to incorporate training and technical assistance on investigating and prosecuting buyers in its anti-trafficking programming, and by making the crime more “costly,” we can finally begin to shrink its incidence.

3. **Treat victims as victims, not criminals, and let survivor voices inform anti-trafficking policy.** Two bills in particular recognize these realities: *the [Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act](#)*, S159, which gives states incentives to approve “Safe Harbor” laws as well as job training options for victims and the *[Survivors of Human Trafficking Empowerment Act](#)*, which creates a survivors-led U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking to review federal policy and programs.

Other proposals may also make valuable contributions, but these are the three most important principles to incorporate in new legislative initiatives.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let us know if you have specific questions or would like more information on our program activities.

Sincerely,

Winnie Lazenko, **4her-North Dakota**, ND

Brooke Axtell, **Allies Against Slavery**, TX

Aliza Amar, **Breaking the Silence Together/Sole Sisters Project**, San Diego, CA

Vednita Carter, **Breaking Free**, St Paul, MN

Leah J. Albright-Byrd, Executive Director/Founder, **Bridget's Dream**, Sacramento, CA

Marian Hatcher, Human Trafficking Coordinator, **Cook County Sheriff's Office, SPACE International Member**, Chicago, IL

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Tina Frundt, **Courtney's House**, Washington, DC

Cherie Jimenez, Founder, **Eva Center**, Boston, MA

D'Lita Miller, Founder/Executive Director, **Families Against Sex Trafficking**, Los Angeles, CA

Kathi Hardy, Founder/Executive Director, **Freedom From Exploitation**, San Diego, CA

Cheryl Briggs, Founder/President, **Mission at Serenity Ranch**, TX

Necole Daniels, **MISSEY, Inc.**, Oakland, CA

Dr. Brook Bello, **More Too Life**, FL

Nola Brantley, **Nola Brantley Speaks!** Oakland, CA

Rebecca Bender, **Rebecca Bender Ministries**, OR

Carissa Phelps, **Runaway Girl, Inc.**, CA

Natasha Falle, Co-Founder, **Sex Trade 101/Canada**

Bridget Perrier, Co-Founder, **Sex Trade 101/Canada**

Stella Marr, Survivor and a Founder, **Sex Trafficking Survivors United**, USA

Amy Green, **Survivors Consultation Network**, San Bernardino, CA

Rachel Thomas, **Sowers Education Group**, Los Angeles, CA

Autumn Burris, **Survivors for Solutions/SPACE Int'l Member**, San Diego, CA

Mark (Marq) Daniel Taylor, **The BUDDY House, Inc.**, GA

Tom Jones, Founder, **The H.O.P.E. Project for Male Survivors**, San Diego, CA

Kristy Childs, **Veronica's Voice, Inc.**, Kansas City, MO

Jeanette Westbrook, **MSSW, Women Graduates- USA/SPACE Int'l Member**, KY

Beth Jacobs, Founder, **Willow Way/Policy Chair, National Survivor Network**, Tuscan, AZ