

PRESS RELEASE

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ALABAMA PASSES KEY LAWS AND RAISES THEIR GRADE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

WASHINGTON, D.C., Alabama [raised their grade](#) from a C to a B this year by strengthening their laws to fight child sex trafficking, according to an annual State Report Card released by [Shared Hope International](#) (SHI), the only U.S. NGO working in every state to end child sex trafficking through legal reform.

“We are excited to see states, like Alabama, take the critical step of protecting child sex trafficking victims from being prosecuted for the crimes committed against them,” said SHI founder Linda Smith.

SHI started the annual report card—known as the Protected Innocence Challenge—six years ago, in 2011. That year, 26 states got Fs and 15 had Ds. Over the last six years, **Alabama**, along with states across the nation, **enacted important laws**:

- This year Alabama's Protected Innocence Challenge grade has gone up from a C to a B.
- Alabama is a leader in the nation, as one of only 19 states and DC, where children can no longer be prosecuted for prostitution, recognizing the crime being committed against them (HB 433 enacted on May 5, 2016).
- The passage of HB 433 increases penalties for human trafficking offenders.

SHI research **found critical gaps** in these areas in the laws of **Alabama**:

- Alabama's human trafficking law requires the use of coercion or deception to cause a minor to engage in a commercial sex act.
- Demand is largely unaddressed in commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) laws, leaving buyers undeterred.
- Sex trafficking victims seeking justice are not protected by a “rape shield” law or courtroom protections and are not assured access to specialized services.

[Shared Hope International](#) is an anti-trafficking organization focusing on prevention, restoration and justice for victims of sex trafficking. Founded in 1998 by Congresswoman Linda Smith, Shared Hope is a trusted leader for training, research, restorative development, and legislative development.

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MEDIA MATERIALS

For media convenience, a variety of resources are available at www.sharedhope.org/press. Video clips, including sex trafficking survivor comments, are available at this location: <https://vimeo.com/user12564384/videos>. Videos are password protected, please enter password sharedmedia1 to access media clips.