



## **VIRGINIA'S NEW SEX TRAFFICKING LAW PAVED THE WAY TO RAISING THE GRADE THIS YEAR**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**, Building upon the critical legislative advancements of passing their first sex trafficking law in 2015, Virginia became one of only 9 states to [raise their grade](#) this year, 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.

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 past 6 years **Virginia**, along with states across the nation, **enacted important laws:**

- Building upon the critical legislative advancements of passing their first sex trafficking law in 2015, this year, **in 2016 Virginia raised their grade from a D to a C.**
- Last year's legislation establishing a sex trafficking law promotes better identification and responses to victims, providing the foundation for this year's improvements which expanded protections for child victims.
- Virginia advanced victim protections by giving victims more time to bring civil law suits against their offenders (SB 133/HB 681).
- Virginia also removed barriers to services by passing HB 600 which allows child welfare to intervene on behalf of child sex trafficking victims.

Despite so much progress Virginia still has gaps in the area of victim protections and must continue to pass laws to increase the protections and services for victims of child sex trafficking.

[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](http://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.