



NATIONAL STUDY REVEALS TOP SEVEN STATES THAT PROTECT AGAINST CHILD TRAFFICKING

A National Call To Action Spurs 44 States to Strengthen Child Trafficking Laws

Arlington, VA—Sweeping national legislative advancements proved successful for Louisiana, Florida and Georgia who will join the ranks of Illinois, Missouri, Texas and Washington in leading the nation with laws that provide protection and justice to child victims of domestic minor sex trafficking, according to research released Nov. 29, 2012 by [Shared Hope International](#).

Recent findings from the 2012 [Protected Innocence Challenge](#) Report, the first comprehensive study on state child sex trafficking laws, show 15 states have raised their grades by enacting legislation that strengthened laws that impact or relate to domestic minor sex trafficking. In addition to the seven leading states listed above that scored a "B" on the 2012 report, nine states earned a "C," compared to only six in 2011. In 2012, 35 states received grades of "D" or lower, including 18 failing grades— a significant improvement from the 2011 scores with 41 states receiving a grade of "D" or lower and 26 failing states.

The release of the Protected Innocence Challenge report is being hosted in conjuncture with [Sharing the Hope 2012](#), a three-day event that includes training, the National Colloquium, a [forum of national experts](#) on the issue of shelter and service provision for child victims of trafficking, and the Sharing the Hope Gala and Pathbreaker Award Ceremony honoring Ernie Allen, President and CEO of the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children; Drew Oosterbaan, Chief, Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) of the U.S. Department of Justice; Amy O'Neill Richard, Senior Advisor to the Director in the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons; and Deborah Richardson, Executive Vice President of the National Center for Civil and Human Rights.

"In 2011, Shared Hope International challenged each state to review the laws on its books and the impact they are having on local children." Linda Smith, President and Founder of Shared Hope International said. "Advocates around the nation united, forming coalitions, legislative review committees, and petitions to strengthen their states laws. Citizens showed they want stronger laws on the books and their efforts proved successful."

"For me the Protected Innocence Challenge signifies liberation from a life of slavery with the opportunity for the oppressed to pursue the American dream of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Shamere McKenzie, Program Assistant, Shared Hope International and Survivor Advocate said.

Every year in the United States, experts estimate at least 100,000 children are exploited in the U.S. commercial sex industry. The average age a child is first exploited through prostitution is 13 years old.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

1. 15 states improved their grades from 2011
 - a. 2 states went up two grades: AK and MA went from F to C
 - b. 13 states went up one grade
 - c. 3 new "B" states: LA, FL, GA
 - d. 6 new "C" states: AK, IN, MA, OH, OK, WI
 - e. 6 new "D" states: CO, MD, NE, NV, SC, UT
2. 7 states improved their Protected Innocence Challenge scores by 10+ points
 - a. MA went up 29.5 pts
 - b. WV went up 21 pts
 - c. LA went up 17 pts
 - d. SC went up 17 pts
 - e. AK went up 14.5 pts
 - f. OH went up 12 pts
 - g. WI went up 10 pts
3. States were scored based on six categories of law. Scores by area of law – states have achieved perfect scores in sections 1 and 6, with "near perfect" scores in the other areas of law:

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- a. Section 1 (Criminalization of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking): IL and TX have perfect scores (10 points possible)
 - b. Section 2 (Criminal Provisions Addressing Demand): LA now has a “near perfect” score with 24.5 points (25 points possible)
 - c. Section 3 (Criminal Provisions for Traffickers): MS, KY, FL and AL have a “near perfect” score with 14.5 points (15 points possible)
 - d. Section 4 (Criminal Provisions for Facilitators): LA and WA have a “near perfect” score with 9.5 points (10 points possible)
 - e. Section 5 (Protected Provisions for Child Victims): IL is the closest to a “near perfect” score with 24.5 points (27.5 points possible)
 - f. Section 6 (Criminal Justice Tools for Investigation and Prosecution): AL, MN, OH and TX have perfect scores (15 points possible)
4. Most Improved = MA
 5. Highest Score = LA
 6. Worst score = WY

4. GRADES:

B (7) – FL, GA, IL, LA, MO, TX, WA

C (9) – AK, AZ, IN, MA, MN, OH, OK, TN, WI

D (17) - AL, CO, DE, IA, KY, MD, MS, NE, NJ, NV, NY, NC, OR, RI, SC, UT, VT

F (18) - AR, CA, CT, DC, HI, ID, KS, ME, MI, MT, NH, NM, ND, PA, SD, VA, WV, WY

5. 2012 Legislative Progress:

One year after the release of the 2011 Protected Innocence Challenge:*

1. **240** state and **38** federal bills were introduced that relate to domestic minor sex trafficking.
2. **78** laws were passed that relate to domestic minor sex trafficking.
3. **40** states had legislation introduced that relates to the Protected Innocence Framework.
4. **33** states enacted legislation related to the Protected Innocence Framework.

**Statistics are based on Congressional Quarterly State Track accounting for legislation introduced or passed between August 1, 2011 and August 1, 2012.*

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ABOUT THE PROTECTED INNOCENCE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK: The Protected Innocence Legislative Framework is the legal analysis tool of the Protected Innocence Challenge, a comprehensive strategy to promote zero tolerance for child sex trafficking. Shared Hope International conducted a 41-component comprehensive analysis of each state’s existing laws as a basis for the Report Card. The Protected Innocence Legislative Framework solely evaluates a state’s existing laws and does not evaluate enforcement or implementation.

The methodology was vetted by experts in the anti-trafficking field including Ambassador Mark Lagon (U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons 2007-2009) and directors from the following organizations: the National District Attorneys Association; American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law; the Protection Project at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies; ECPAT-USA; Children at Risk, Houston, Texas; and A Future. Not a Past., Atlanta, Georgia.

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MEDIA MATERIALS

For media convenience, a variety of video clips and resources, 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.

ABOUT SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL: Shared Hope International was founded in 1998, by former U.S. Congresswoman Linda Smith, and exists to rescue and restore women and children in crisis. We are leaders in a worldwide effort to prevent and eradicate sex trafficking and slavery using a three-pronged strategy: prevent, rescue & restore, and bring justice. For more information about Shared Hope International, and the *Protected Innocence Challenge*, go to www.sharedhope.org.

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