



**NEW REPORT SHOWS KANSAS IS LEADING LEGISLATIVE CHANGE TO
COMBAT CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING**

WASHINGTON, D.C., A report released today by Shared Hope International, showed Kansas as a leader in a 7-year trend in improved state laws that combat child sex trafficking. Kansas is one of two states that has risen four grades levels since the report, the Protected Innocence Challenge, was released in 2011. Shared Hope congratulates Kansas' leadership for steadily enacting meaningful laws that increase both demand deterrence and victim protections.

As the only U.S. NGO working in every state to end the scourge of child sex trafficking through legal reform, Shared Hope launched the Protected Innocence Challenge in 2011. The *Challenge*, provides annual Report Cards, grading all 50 states and D.C. by applying a framework composed of 41 areas of law that set the minimum standards for combating child sex trafficking.

In the first year, Kansas, along with 25 other states, received a failing grade. The 2017 Protected Innocence Challenge grades illustrate significant progress in our overall score as a nation – the national average has risen 23 points on the grade scale in seven years, from 59% to 82%. Significantly, in that same period of time, Kansas increased its own grade from an F to an A, and now joins seven other "A" states.

Like the other "A" states, Kansas exemplifies the key to this success: a relentless commitment to continuous improvement of its trafficking laws. This year, that commitment culminated in passage of SB40 which addressed demand and removed barriers faced by victims such as access to crime victims' compensation and expungement of juvenile records obtained as a result of their victimization.

"Kansas comes back each legislative session to introduce new bills that expand victim protections, hold buyers accountable, or provide new tools to law enforcement," commented former Congresswoman and Shared Hope founder Linda Smith. "SB 40 was a critical bill for expressly recognizing buyers as trafficking offenders, thus allowing all commercially sexually exploited children to be identified as trafficking victims and eligible for the specific protections that are afforded to this class of crime victims."

"Since our state's first anti-human trafficking law was enacted in 2005, Kansas has made great strides in combating this crime against human dignity," said Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt. "Our new laws provide tools to strengthen enforcement, discourage demand, support and assist human trafficking survivors and help identify human trafficking when it occurs along our roads and highways. We are taking a comprehensive approach to address what is often a complex crime. One key is raising awareness of the driving force behind sex trafficking – the demand for commercial sex, most often with children. Buyers who create this demand must be held accountable for their enabling role."

Shared Hope's grades will be released in a livestream briefing on November 15 at 11am. [Watch here](#). It will be followed at 12pm by a virtual panel discussion with survivors of sex trafficking. [Register for the panel here](#).

MEDIA CONTACT:

Susanna Bean | 717.608.1039 | Susanna@sharedhope.org

[Shared Hope International](#) is an international anti-trafficking organization focusing on prevention, restoration and justice for victims of sex trafficking. [Linda Smith](#), served as a state legislator and Member of Congress from Washington State (1983-1998), and is the author of *Renting Lacy* (2009). She founded Shared Hope in 1998.

MEDIA MATERIALS:

For media convenience, a variety of resources are available at www.sharedhope.org/press.