



**NEW REPORT REFLECTS OREGON'S STEADY LEGISLATIVE COMMITMENT TO  
COMBATING CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**, A report released today by Shared Hope International demonstrates a 7-year trend in improved state laws that combat child sex trafficking. With new legislation, HB 2740, passed this year, Oregon exemplifies this trend with the commitment to increasing the identification of commercially sexually exploited youth as victims of sex trafficking by removing the "force, fraud, or coercion" requirement when a minor victim under 18 years of age is involved. This critical change mirrors Federal law and the laws in 47 other states and D.C., which recognize that minors under 18 are especially vulnerable to exploitation, thus increasing their susceptibility to trafficking by means beyond force, fraud, or coercion.

"We are thankful that the Legislature expanded the protection of child trafficking victims, by eliminating the need to prove that force, fraud, or coercion was used in all cases involving victims under age 18," said Joel Shapiro, Oregon Civil Litigation Attorney, whose practice provides representation for trafficking survivors. "No child chooses to be trafficked, and while it may be hard to prove what occurred in some cases, we know that all children engaged in sex trafficking are victims and can't consent to that activity, so there's no need for courts to require a showing of force, fraud, or coercion in order to convict perpetrators. By removing this requirement, the Oregon Legislature has taken a strong step forward."

Shapiro shared the implementation effects that strong legislation has on the lives of survivors, sharing, "We also achieved tremendous success on behalf of two trafficking victims through civil litigation against a strip club where they were exploited as young teenagers. We are proud that this groundbreaking litigation allows these brave survivors to rebuild their lives and holds perpetrators accountable for profiting by sexually exploiting children."

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. During the first year, 26 states received a failing grade. The 2017 Protected Innocence Challenge illustrates significant progress in our overall score as a nation – the national average has risen 23 points on the grade scale in second years, from 59% to 82%. Oregon has consistently improved their score, and within 7 years, was one of only 22 states that raised their grade two levels, from a D to a B.

As a leading state in passing legislation to fight child sex trafficking, Shapiro reflected on what it will take to continue this trend, "Our work with the Oregon Legislature this year significantly expanded the rights and protections afforded to sex trafficking victims and survivors. Victims now have an affirmative defense to protect against certain criminal charges, can inform courts they've been trafficked to mitigate a criminal sentence, and survivors can vacate some past convictions. While there is much more work to do to protect trafficking victims and survivors, we're hopeful we can carry this year's momentum into upcoming legislative sessions."

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](#).

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[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](http://www.sharedhope.org/press).