



**NEW REPORT SHOWS WASHINGTON AS LEADER LEGISLATIVE IMPROVEMENT TO  
COMBAT 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. Newly enacted legislation, including SB 5818 and SB 5272, sponsored by Senator Padden and Senator Saldana, respectively, exemplifies this trend by holding buyers of sex with children accountable, and increasing protections for survivors by opening doors to justice, including the opportunity to vacate records obtained as a result of a being a trafficking victim.

“These two bills, SB 5818 and SB 5272, are additional examples of Washington’s sustained commitment to addressing trafficking,” remarked former Congresswoman and Founder and President of Shared Hope International, Linda Smith. “The State’s focus on creating productive collaboration among grassroots advocates, service providers and legislators helps advance policies to protect the children of Washington State and hold offenders responsible for their role in this egregious crime.”

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 subsequent years, from 59% to 82%. Notably, Washington is one of only eight states to receive an A under the *Challenge*.

“Washington is a leader in passing laws to fight child sex trafficking,” Smith said, “not just because they are an A state, but because they consistently choose to prioritize this issue and return session after session to improve their laws.”

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).