H.R. 2730 Strengthening the Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act  
Sponsored by Representative Karen R. Bass (D-CA)  
Original Co-Sponsors include: Representatives Tom Marino, Donald Payne, Shelia Jackson Lee

ISSUE

According to the Center for the Human Rights for Children, Loyola University Chicago, an estimated 293,000 young people at risk for being trafficked specifically for the sex trade. And while estimates indicate that thousands of child trafficking victims exist in the United States, very few have been identified and recovered.

The first points of contact for a child victim of trafficking are law enforcement officials and state child welfare agencies. Few child welfare professionals are aware of the federal anti-trafficking law, Trafficking Victims Protection Act, and other state laws that provide critical support and protect the rights of victims. Even fewer have been adequately trained or prepared to respond to child victims of trafficking, and fewer still have incorporated policies, protocols, and case management techniques to serve this population appropriately.

SOLUTION

Ensure that child welfare agencies have the tools to understand the unique needs of child victims of human trafficking and the resources to appropriately serve them.

BILL SUMMARY

This bill will strengthen the child welfare response to child trafficking by: 1) Providing child welfare employees with appropriate guidance on how to identify, document, educate, and counsel children at risk of exploitation; 2) Extending specialized care and services to age 21 for foster care youth that have been trafficked; 3) Ensuring child welfare agencies place victims of trafficking in homes with the capacity to meet their unique needs, including mental health counseling, security services, and language skills; and 4) Adding a “human trafficking” classification to the child welfare reporting system in order to ensure appropriate services are provided to victims and to monitor trends; 5) Requiring child welfare agencies to report their current procedures & policies to combat trafficking to the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Congressional Budget Office has indicated no direct costs are associated with this legislation.

STATUS

The bill was introduced on August 1, 2011. Representative Bass is seeking cosponsors.

SUPPORTED BY

Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST), End Child Pornography and Trafficking (ECPAT International), Shared Hope, International, and the Center for the Human Rights of Children, Loyola University.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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