



human rights *first*

American ideals. Universal values.

February 24, 2015

Senator Bob Corker
Chairman
Senator Bob Menendez
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
446 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Dear Senator Corker and Senator Menendez:

I write to express Human Rights First's support for the End Modern Slavery Initiative Act of 2015. This bipartisan legislation is designed to bring much-needed resources and momentum to the global fight against human trafficking. We applaud your leadership in putting it forward, and we urge its swift passage.

Modern slavery is the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world. Ending it will require the cooperation of all levels of government, business, law enforcement, and civil society. Because human trafficking is a profit-driven enterprise in which perpetrators operate with relative impunity, successful strategies to combat it must focus on increasing the risks for the perpetrators and enablers, and decreasing the profits. Most traffickers operate with relative impunity. While the International Labour Organization estimates that nearly 21 million people are enslaved globally, the State Department's most recent annual Trafficking in Persons report states that fewer than 9,500 human trafficking cases were prosecuted worldwide in 2013, resulting in less than 6,000 reported convictions.

The financial resources currently at work fighting modern slavery are alarmingly low. Worldwide, governments and NGOs spend roughly a combined \$124 million annually to combat trafficking, while traffickers are earning exorbitant profits estimated at \$150 billion per year. Even as the world leader in supporting international anti-trafficking programs, the U.S. government's annual spending of \$50 million on international anti-slavery programs is barely a fraction—about .1%—of the U.S. foreign aid budget. That is not a fair fight.

The End Modern Slavery Initiative will set up a non-profit to pool government and private funding to combat trafficking and slavery worldwide. The \$1.5 billion fund will start with a commitment of \$250 million from the U.S. government, contingent on raising the remaining funding from foreign governments and private entities over a 7 year period. This fund will bolster law enforcement in select geographic areas with a goal of reducing

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the incidence of slavery by at least 50% during the duration of the project. This concentrated investment in key geographic areas is crucial to identifying those successful methods of increasing the risk to traffickers that can be scaled up and replicated across the globe. After five years, the Board of the End Modern Slavery Initiative is required to present a plan for eradicating slavery once and for all, based on the results of the projects monitored by the fund.

Slavery is legal nowhere, yet happens everywhere. Eradicating it will require significant additional resources, as well as sustained focus and cooperation among nations, state and local governments, law enforcement, private companies, and civil society. The End Modern Slavery Initiative Act of 2015 will make a substantial contribution to this effort.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to eradicate human trafficking. The United States has a unique leadership role to play in this fight. We pledge to work with you and others on the Committee and in the Senate to ensure that slavery, which was such a shameful part of our nation's history, has no part in its future.

Sincerely,

Elisa Massimino
President and CEO