



Background for Congressional District Visits: Human Trafficking

What's the issue?

Human trafficking is the third most profitable form of organized crime, following illicit trading in drugs and weapons, with close to \$150 billion in illegal annual revenue. Human traffickers prey on easy targets—disenfranchised women and children, migrant workers, indigenous people, and populations who are displaced or severely impoverished. The practice is most prevalent in societies with wide economic and social disparity. Fifty-five percent of forced laborers and 98 percent of sex trafficking survivors are women and girls.

As Catholics in the United States, we work to fight human trafficking because it is an affront to the lives and dignity of our brothers and sisters who are its victims. Understanding this reality, it is imperative that comprehensive legislation is put forward and passed to support the needs of victims and ensure that trafficking in humans cannot continue. In the last session of Congress legislation was before Congress, although it did not pass, that could help to reduce human trafficking and forced labor: The Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act of 2015.

This legislation would require companies to report on their efforts to ensure their products are not the result of child or forced labor, slavery or human trafficking. This transparency would help consumers to make informed choices, and therefore press businesses to do more to avoid using slave or forced labor – whether knowingly or unknowingly. It is imperative that this or similar legislation gets reintroduced and swiftly passed in this new session of Congress.

What is the Church doing to help?

Our Church works to fight human trafficking, both abroad and within the United States. For more than a decade, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has been a national leader in the fight against sex and labor trafficking. USCCB and its partners provide intensive support to survivors of human trafficking, having assisted 2,600 survivors and more than 550 of their family members. Catholic Relief Services has worked to reduce human trafficking through more than 100 programs in 35 countries and, through public-private initiatives, has recently engaged the corporate sector to help eradicate slave labor.

What can I do to help?

Pope Francis has called human trafficking “a crime against humanity” and asked that we fight against this evil. You can start by scheduling a district visit with your members of Congress this summer, asking them to reintroduce and swiftly pass the Business Supply Chain and Transparency Act. Download [instructions on how to set up a visit](#) and [tips for a successful visit](#) with your members of Congress. You can also contact your [CRS regional office](#) for assistance.

For more information, visit [Catholic Relief Services](#) and the [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) websites. We also invite you to review [CRS' policy recommendations](#).



Talking Points

1. As your constituent, I urge you to reintroduce and support the swift passage of the Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act of 2015, H.R. 3226/S. 1968, or similar legislation focused on creating clean supply chains.
2. This legislation would require companies to report publicly on their efforts to ensure their products are not the result of child or forced labor, slavery or human trafficking. If enacted, this legislation would play a critical role in protecting millions of people around the globe.
3. Too often, companies are simply unaware of the existence of modern-day slavery in their global operations and supply chains. However, the principles of justice and moral reasoning dictate that companies have a responsibility to respect human rights and address issues like exploitative supply chains. Laws in California and the United Kingdom already require such reporting, so for many companies, this law will simply help standardize requirements.
4. I believe we can fight human trafficking—and legislation plays an important role in achieving that goal. As your constituent and a socially-conscious consumer, I urge you to work with your colleagues in Congress to introduce, cosponsor and support legislation that helps to ensure the products and services we purchase are not the result of child or forced labor, slavery or human trafficking.