



IWV Supports The Empowering Law Enforcement to Fight Sex Trafficking Demand Act

October 7, 2019

Dear Member of Congress,

Independent Women's Voice, which fights to enhance people's freedom, choices, and opportunities, is proud to support H.R. 1110, the Empowering Law Enforcement to Fight Sex Trafficking Demand Act introduced by Representative Vicky Hartzler (R-MO).

The Empowering Law Enforcement to Fight Sex Trafficking Demand Act would give law enforcement officials the ability to use existing federal grants already set aside for criminal justice under the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grants Program to combat human sex trafficking. Sex trafficking or modern-day slavery is one of the worst violations of human rights imaginable. The victims of the heinous crime, **who are predominantly women and young girls**, are subjected to a life of abuse and exploitation.

Sadly, human sex trafficking is becoming more common in the U.S. Since 2007, there have been a total of 32,024 reported sex trafficking cases. In 2012, **2,377 cases** were reported; in 2018, there were 7,859 known cases, suggesting this is a growing problem. And these are just the reported trafficking crimes. In reality, there are far more cases that go unreported. We must do more to protect our communities from this violation of human rights and prevent future trafficking.

One way to reduce sex trafficking is to deter the demand for it by pursuing those who buy it. The Empowering Law Enforcement to Fight Sex Trafficking Demand Act will help do just that by providing law enforcement programs with needed funds to target and uncover the perpetrators of this crime.

Migrant women and children are particularly vulnerable to sex trafficking. Another way policymakers can address the trafficking issue is by implementing much needed reforms to our

immigration system. Under the current system, having a minor with you functions as a “get into the U.S. free” pass. As a result, laws are abused by human trafficking organizations every day. We cannot allow this abuse of our system to continue.

We commend Representative Hartzler for her leadership on this important issue and urge all members to act immediately to protect future victims of human trafficking by voting yes in support of the Empowering Law Enforcement to Fight Sex Trafficking Demand Act when it comes to the floor for a vote.

Respectfully,



Hadley Heath Manning

Director of Policy

Independent Women's Voice