

# HADASSAH'S

## DOMESTIC ADVOCACY AGENDA

### WOMEN, HEALTH & FAMILY

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Human trafficking – the forceful recruitment for commercial sex acts (sex trafficking) or involuntary servitude and work (labor trafficking) – is a problem around the world and at home in the U.S.** Here, 83% of domestic victims are U.S. citizens, and women and minors are among the most vulnerable.<sup>1</sup>

**Human trafficking not only robs victims of their freedom, but impacts entire communities.** Trafficking and its related crimes not only harm the women involved; they also undermine America's social, political and economic fabric by devaluing individuals, demeaning women, and increasing violence and crime.

**It could happen in any city or neighborhood around the United States.** Sex trafficking can occur through escort and marriage services, at brothels, and even at bars and clubs. Labor trafficking is found in domestic housekeeping arrangements, small business operations (from nail salons to restaurants), or sales rings (with victims forced to peddle magazines or flowers, for example).

The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) hotline service regularly tracks data on human trafficking. Between 2007 and 2012:

- NHTRC received **reports of 9,298 cases**, including **1,488 survivors contacting NHTRC**.
- NHTRC answered over **65,557 calls, 1,735 online tip forms, and 5,251 emails**.
- Reports covered **every state in the U.S.**, and the hotline saw a **259% increase in calls**.
- **Women were referenced as victims in 85% of sex trafficking cases.**<sup>2</sup>

Though the number of trafficking victims in the U.S. is not known, it is estimated that **hundreds of thousands of American minors are threatened by commercial sexual exploitation**. According to the Department of Justice, 300,000 children are at risk for becoming victims of trafficking in the U.S. each year.<sup>3</sup>

### RECENT POLICY ACTION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking has gained momentum on the national stage thanks to the hard work of community advocates, including Hadassah members and supporters from across the country.

In May 2015, Congress passed the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (S. 178). This crucial legislation will strengthen the child welfare system; expand funding for victim services; mandate specialized training programs; increase penalties for traffickers; outlaw trafficking-

<sup>1</sup> Published by U.S. Department of Justice at <http://1.usa.gov/1hDCj5I>.

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related publicity or advertisements and more. This legislation builds upon the Trafficking Victims Protection Act – last reauthorized in 2013 – and other key pre-existing anti-trafficking legislation.

Additional trafficking legislation is still pending in Congress. The Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act (H.R. 1779) would authorize funding to help keep these youth from being targeted for trafficking and to help trafficked youth escape their situation. The Survivors of Human Trafficking Empowerment Act (H.R. 500) would establish a survivor-led advisory council on human trafficking to help inform the federal government's response. Congress is also considering legislation to address trafficking abroad. The Trafficking Prevention in Foreign Affairs Contracting Act (H.R. 400) would ensure U.S. tax dollars do not support trafficking of foreign workers employed by the U.S. government overseas and the Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act (H.R. 3226) would require large corporations to meet high standards for ensuring that their suppliers are not using victims of human trafficking. The End Modern Slavery Initiative Act (S. 553) would establish a foundation to fund international programs and projects that provide services to victims or work to reduce trafficking and slavery.

Anti-trafficking initiatives are active in many states and communities, with state-level policy initiatives on trafficking in New Hampshire, Illinois, and Pennsylvania, and recent victories in New Jersey and Arizona.<sup>4</sup> In 2014, 37 states passed new anti-trafficking legislation (of varying strength).<sup>4</sup>

### HADASSAH'S WORK AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Hadassah has been a staunch advocate for the prevention of all forms of violence against women and children, including support for anti-human trafficking legislation and other efforts. Hadassah urges our regions and chapters to educate their respective members, and encourages them to advocate and join in coalitions with other advocacy groups to combat human trafficking.

Hadassah was a vocal supporter of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act and continues to work actively at the grassroots level to support additional federal and state anti-trafficking legislation.

### TAKE ACTION!

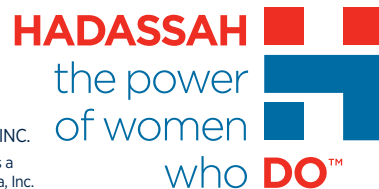
- Visit the Hadassah National Action Center and urge Congress to continue the momentum on human trafficking. Send a letter advocating for legislation that supports victims of both sex and labor trafficking, and penalizes all those profiting from trafficking enterprises.
- Work with your Hadassah chapter to join anti-trafficking coalitions in your local community, as well as pushing for stronger policies at the national and state levels.
- Check out our advocacy website for exciting updates, and sign up to receive regular policy alerts and next steps for how you can get involved.

<sup>4</sup> Published by Polaris Project at <http://bit.ly/1vRZBB>

[hadassah.org/advocate](http://hadassah.org/advocate)  
[@Hadassah](https://facebook.com/hadassah)

The information and content contained herein are as of May 2015 and are intended for educational purposes only. We encourage you to contact our sources directly for additional information.

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