

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:
1540 Kuser Road, Suite A9
Hamilton, NJ 08619-3828
(609) 585-7878
TTY (609) 585-3650

108 Lacey Road, Suite 38A
Whiting, NJ 08759-1331
(732) 350-2300

2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3004
(202) 225-3765

<http://chrissmith.house.gov>



Congress of the United States
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House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Considerations of H.R. 2830, Trafficking Victims Protection
Reauthorization Act of 2011

Excerpts of Remarks
Congressman Chris Smith
Full Committee Hearing of Foreign Affairs Committee
October 5, 2011

Thank you, Madame Chairman, for bringing H.R. 2830 before the Committee on Foreign Affairs for consideration. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the Ranking Member, Mr. Howard Berman, for co-sponsoring this legislation.

As you know, Madame Chairman, this is the fourth reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act that I initially sponsored in 2000. Although we have learned many important lessons over the past decade and have made great strides in combating this human rights abuse, women, children and men around the world continue to be victimized. It is critical that we continue United States leadership in efforts to end human trafficking both domestically and abroad. The legislation that I am proposing would authorize such funding for fiscal years 2012 and 2013.

The Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute that I am submitting takes into account the extreme fiscal constraints that we face in our country and the need to reduce our federal deficit. Much to my regret, the cost of several key provisions in H.R. 2830 necessitated their removal for consideration at this time. However, it is my sincere hope and expectation that important initiatives, such as the creation of a special anti-trafficking office within the Department of Defense and a comprehensive mechanism to regulate foreign labor contracting, will be back on the table when resources are available to support their implementation.

A number of important provisions for preventing and prosecuting human trafficking and protecting trafficking survivors remain in this amendment. One would give the Secretary of State the authority to limit the validity of the passports of registered sex offenders to one year, or such period as the Secretary would deem appropriate. The need for this authority became apparent when the Government Accountability Office reported last year that over 4,500 registered sex offenders were issued passports in fiscal year 2008. This included an

offender who was convicted of attempted rape of a child with special needs and another who attempted sex with a 2-year old girl. The State Department clearly needs this authority to limit the travel of such individuals who are likely to engage in severe forms of human trafficking in other countries.

Furthermore, the amendment would authorize assistance to be used to protect vulnerable populations at risk of severe forms of human trafficking in post-conflict situations and humanitarian emergencies, provide additional tools to prosecute sex trafficking abroad, and increase monitoring of forced or child labor here in the United States. It would also expand the information to be included in the Attorney General's annual report to Congress to include any contracts terminated by a federal agency as a result of human trafficking by a contractor, and whether any employees have been disciplined, terminated or prosecuted for violating the zero-tolerance policy.

Therefore, I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this amendment, and I thank you again, Madame Chairman, for the consideration of this bill.