



## **Promoting Labor Rights in the Cut Flower Industry**

**Rep. Christopher H. Smith**  
**June 5, 2025**

Good afternoon, and welcome to everyone joining us for this hearing.

The size of the cut flower industry is truly impressive. Written expert testimony refers to 9 billion cut flowers imported annually into the United States, 85% of them from Colombia and Ecuador – 320,000 jobs in those two countries alone. The United States we spend several billion dollars annually on cut flowers, and we import 36% of all cut flowers *globally*.

There is also a substantial U.S. domestic industry in cut flowers – over 420 substantial businesses engaged in providing U.S.-grown cut flowers, including my own state of New Jersey.

This is a gigantic industry, with implications for the lives of a tremendous number of people.

Many of them are vulnerable people, working at wage levels or in countries or under labor arrangements where they have little ability to defend their interests.

So Congress surely has responsibility to people affected by this industry, and I thank the Co-Chairman for calling this hearing.

As the Chairman of the Africa subcommittee and the author of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, I'm particularly interested to learn more about the cut flower industry in Africa, which I understand exports to Europe, and about any incidents of trafficking in persons and other grave human rights abuses in this industry.