

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

MONMOUTH
112 Village Center Drive
Freehold, NJ 07728-2510
(732) 780-3035

OCEAN
405 Route 539
Plumsted, NJ 08514-2303
(609) 286-2571; (732) 350-2300

MERCER
4573 South Broad Street
Hamilton, NJ 08620-2215
(609) 585-7878

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

<http://chrissmith.house.gov>



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

SENIOR MEMBER, FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN, AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH,
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE

WESTERN HEMISPHERE
SUBCOMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

CO-CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA

DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

**Winning the Fight Against Human Trafficking: The Frederick Douglass Trafficking
Victims Prevention and Protection Act of 2017 (H.R. 2200)**

*Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global
Human Rights, and International Organizations
Excerpts of remarks by Rep. Chris Smith
5/2/2017*

Good afternoon, and welcome to our hearing today on accelerating the fight against human trafficking with particular focus on the new Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Act of 2017—the comprehensive, bipartisan legislation that my friend and colleague Karen Bass and I introduced last Thursday joined by Chairman Royce, Representatives Jackson Lee, Brooks, Frankel, Wagner, Cardenas, Poe, and Costello.

In the fight to end modern day slavery, and as the author of the landmark [Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000](#), the new bill honors the extraordinary legacy of one of the greatest Americans who ever lived.

Born a slave in 1818—we look forward to celebrating the 200th anniversary of his birth next year—Frederick Douglass escaped slavery when he was 20 and dedicated his entire life to abolishing slavery and, after emancipation, to ending Jim Crow laws while struggling for full equality for African American citizens. A gifted orator, author, editor, statesman (and Republican), he died in 1895.

The Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act authorizes \$130 million over 4 years to prevent human trafficking, protect victims, and beef up prosecution at home and abroad. Among other things, I note that this bill encourages more hotels at home and abroad to put policies and trainings in place so that the hotels are less likely to be used by human traffickers to exploit children. To the extent practicable, the U.S. government will direct U.S. government travelers using taxpayer money to use hotels that have taken affirmative steps to end trafficking within their walls.

The new bill seeks to restore the credibility of the Trafficking in Persons Report, produced annually by the Department of State, to hold countries accountable for progress, or the lack thereof, in the fight against human trafficking. Talk is cheap—we insist on sustainable action.

This report scrutinizes more than 190 countries—with the credible threat of serious sanction for egregious violators branded Tier 3—to improve their trafficking laws and actions.

But in several notable cases, particularly in 2015, countries that should have been held accountable by the last Administration with Tier 3 designations were given a pass—countries such as Malaysia, Cuba, China, Oman, Uzbekistan, and others. The new bill tries to ensure that countries complicit in trafficking are held accountable. No politics. Ever. And it will remove from current law the presumption that countries failing to quantify convictions and identify victims somehow deserve passing grades.

IJM's Policy Director Tim Gehring will underscore that concern in his testimony today stating, "The politicization of the tier rankings, against the advice of the anti-trafficking experts at TIP Office is to the detriment of the annual report, the U.S. Government's leadership on combatting this human rights abuse, and, ultimately, to the people exploited in the countries which receive an undeserved higher ranking."

Last year alone, I chaired two hearings on this: "[Accountability Over Politics: Scrutinizing the Trafficking in Persons Report](#)" in July and earlier in March, "[Get it Right This Time: A Victims-Centered Trafficking in Persons Report](#)."

I was profoundly disappointed that the Obama Administration chose to politicize tier rankings rather than speak the truth to power. If the Trump Administration follows that dangerous precedent I will be no less a critic.

The Frederick Douglass Act will limit the amount of time a country can stay on the warning, Tier 2 Watch List, inspiring countries to take action against trafficking today, not in four years when their warnings are up.

The Act will also ensure that countries still using child soldiers, such as Afghanistan, where boys are on the front lines fighting the Taliban by day and being used as sex slaves at night, stop this obscene practice before being allowed to partner with the U.S. military – something Green Beret Sergeant First Class Charles Martland tried to do at great personal cost.

The Act will also ensure that waivers for countries using child soldiers are not abused. In 2016, only three of 10 countries designated as using child soldiers were not allowed to access funds, and these were the countries we did not fund anyway. The Act will ensure that the waiver is used only in cases where the President can ensure steps are being taken to address the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

In addition, the Act will help keep goods made by child trafficking victims out of the United States by ensuring continued funding for and enhancing the specificity of Department of Labor reports on slave-made goods.

Provisions in the Act will prevent the abuse of domestic servants in embassies and diplomatic homes in the United States. Diplomats and their families in the U.S. are getting off scot-free after trafficking domestic servants in their homes—we are going to change that. Trafficking is illegal here, no matter who you are.

The Act encourages accountability for U.S. government funds going abroad to help trafficking victims, and strengthens implementation of U.S. laws and regulations to prevent government purchases from putting money in the hands of traffickers.

We welcome several of the top anti-human trafficking organizations who have endorsed the legislation, including ATEST, the US Council of Catholic Bishops, which is submitting testimony for the record, and the Frederick Douglass Family Foundation, whose work educating children about the threat of trafficking has inspired this legislation.