



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

Multi-Sectoral Partnerships to Combat Human Trafficking

September 13, 2017

2:00 – 3:30 PM

2255 Rayburn House Office Building

Opening Remarks as prepared for delivery

Good afternoon. I join my esteemed colleague and Co-Chair Randy Hultgren in welcoming you to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission hearing on multi-sectoral partnerships to combat human trafficking. And I add my thanks to our witnesses for taking the time to share your knowledge and recommendations with us. We appreciate your presence.

Trafficking in persons – modern slavery -- is a global scourge in which men, women, and children are subjected to compelled service for purposes of exploitation. It involves the recruitment, transportation and harboring of persons, by means of force, abduction, fraud, or deception. It is a moral failure and a grave violation of human rights.

Unlike the slavery of the 18th and 19th centuries in the U.S., trafficking is illegal here and around the world. But it persists in a variety of forms: commercial sex trafficking, forced labor, bonded labor, involuntary domestic servitude, the use of child soldiers -- victimizing millions of people and contributing to a multi-billion-dollar criminal industry.

The good news is that in our country and around the world over the last couple of decades, we're seeing real efforts to end human trafficking. The U.S. Congress, acting on a bipartisan basis, is part of that effort – beginning with the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, and most recently, HR 2200, The Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Act, which passed the House in July. I am privileged to have cosponsored both of these pieces of legislation.

And past administrations, both Republican and Democratic, have taken the trafficking issue seriously and worked to implement the 3P framework – prosecution, protection and prevention.

But the bad news is that trafficking continues, both within and across our borders. So we are here today to discuss what more can be done and in particular, how to better coordinate efforts across all sectors – government, NGOs and business.

Back in 2009, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton included the idea of a fourth “P” – “partnership” -- as part of her rollout of the State Department’s annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. In an op-ed in the *Washington Post* on the role of partnerships for anti-trafficking, Clinton wrote:

To our strategy of prosecution, protection and prevention, it’s time to add a fourth P: partnerships. The criminal networks that enslave millions of people cross borders and span continents. Our response must do the same. The United States is committed to building partnerships with governments and organizations around the world, to finding new and more effective ways to take on the scourge of human trafficking. We want to support our partners in their efforts and find ways to improve our own.¹

Under the Obama administration, the role of partnerships expanded in U.S. policy to address human trafficking. It is my hope that approach will continue under the current administration.

So today, I look forward to hearing how we can further strengthen this fourth “P,” with an eye toward the day when no human being will be able to enslave another.

Thank you and I yield back.

¹ Hillary Clinton, “Partnering Against Trafficking,” *Washington Post*, opinion, June 17, 2009.