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**Heller, Cornyn, Klobuchar, Grassley, Feinstein Introduce Bill to Strengthen and Reauthorize Key Anti-Human Trafficking Measures**

**Washington, D.C.**–U.S. Senators Dean Heller (R-NV) signed on as an original cosponsor to legislation introduced by John Cornyn (R-TX), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Chuck Grassley (R-IA), and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) called theAbolish Human Trafficking Act, which strengthens and reauthorizes key programs that support survivors of human trafficking and provide resources to federal, state, and local law enforcement officials on the front lines of the fight against modern-day slavery.

 "The scourge of human trafficking exists right here in our own backyards, and we must continue to fight against it," **said Heller**. “I am proud to support the Abolish Human Trafficking Act, which supports victims of human trafficking and empowers law enforcement to combat this heinous crime."

**“**Human trafficking is modern-day slavery, and one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time. We have a solemn responsibility to support victims of human trafficking as they recover and to help law enforcement bring justice to the criminals who exploit them,” **said Cornyn.** “This bill ensures that both victims and law enforcement officials will continue to get the resources they need to end commercial exploitation in America.”

“Over the past year, we’ve seen a significant increase in the amount of survivors calling for support and cases reported to the National Trafficking Hotline. This is truly a national problem, and that’s why I’ve made it a priority to address this issue in the Senate,” **said Klobuchar**. “Our bipartisan legislation equips law enforcement with the resources to crack down on this crime and provides victims with the support they need to get back on their feet.”

“The exploitation of fellow human beings must not be tolerated in our society.  This bill takes important steps in the fight against human trafficking through additional law enforcement, prevention and victim assistance.  It’s one of many bills I’ve supported or sponsored in an ongoing effort to stop human traffickers in their tracks,” **said Grassley**.

**Funding for Victims’ Services and Law Enforcement:** The Abolish Human Trafficking Act extends the life of the Department of Justice Domestic Trafficking Victims’ Fund, which is financed through fines on convicted human traffickers and sexual predators and through an annual allotment from the Community Health Centers Fund and was used to provide nearly $5 million to victims’ services last year.  Additionally, the legislation clarifies that federal law enforcement may impose liens on the property of criminals who fail to pay required fines to the Domestic Trafficking Victims’ Fund and allows Child Advocacy Centers to use resources from the Fund to provide services to human trafficking victims. Finally, the legislation reauthorizes key Trafficking Victims Protection Act programs that are used to fund restorative services for victims and law enforcement anti-trafficking operations

**Empowering and Restoring Victims’ Lives:** The Abolish Human Trafficking Act permanently authorizes the Human Trafficking Advisory Council, through which human trafficking survivors formulate annual recommendations to combat and prevent this crime to the Federal Government.  The legislation also requires mandatory restitution for victims of commercial sexual exploitation offenses.

**Fighting Human Traffickers:** The Abolish Human Trafficking Act gives law enforcement additional tools and resources to target criminal street gangs involved in organized human trafficking and sexual exploitation. By enhancing statutory maximum penalties for several human trafficking offenses, the legislation ensures the penalties remain an adequate tool for prosecutors.  The bill also expands the authority of state and local governments to seek wiretap warrants in sexual exploitation and prostitution cases and establishes Human Trafficking Coordinators at every U.S. Attorney’s Office and at the Department of Justice.  In order to help curb foreign offenders and internal human trafficking, the legislation clarifies that persons who travel overseas with a motivating purpose of engaging in illicit sex tourism can be federally prosecuted for their offense.

**Increasing Awareness and Prevention:**  The Abolish Human Trafficking Act requires Department of Homeland Security to develop specialized screening protocols for implementation across federal, state, and local law enforcement anti-trafficking task forces to ensure agencies nationwide are trained to recognize victims and refer them to services instead of arresting or prosecuting them.  Additionally, the legislation directs the Department of Health and Human Services to continue a pilot program to provide training to health care providers on human trafficking.  The bill makes a number of improvements to data collection and reporting so that agencies can better utilize information.  The legislation ensures that regular reporting on the number of human trafficking crimes is separated from reports on the particular form of the offense for the use of the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program and requires the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking to provide an annual report on the use of data received from the national human trafficking hotline.  Lastly, the Abolish Human Trafficking Act requires National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct a landmark study on the long-term physical and psychological effects of the commercial sex trade.

**Breaking the Cycle of Sexual Exploitation:** The Abolish Human Trafficking Act ends government partnerships with the commercial sex industry and improves the national strategy to combat human trafficking by utilizing demand reduction techniques.

Senators Bob Corker (R-TN), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Ron Wyden (D-OR), March Rubio (R-FL), Chris Coons (D-DE), and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) originally cosponsored the legislation.

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