

Statement of

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein

United States Senator
United States Senate
September 14, 2011

I would like to thank Chairman Leahy for convening today's hearing and for his leadership in working to reauthorize the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPRA). I am a cosponsor of this legislation because I believe we must do more to protect the thousands of men, women and children who are trafficked into the United States each year.

California ranks as one of the top U.S. destination points for trafficked victims, so I am particularly interested in hearing the witnesses' testimony about their work in the U.S. and overseas to combat human trafficking.

Earlier this year, the federal government filed its largest human trafficking case to date, against Global Horizons, Inc., a California-based farm labor contractor. The government claims that Global Horizons trafficked over 200 Thai males to farms in the U.S. where they were subjected to severe abuse. It is my hope that the federal government will continue to vigorously pursue these types of cases against human traffickers and provide needed services to the survivors.

I am pleased that the trafficking reauthorization bill that Senator Leahy introduced earlier this year includes provisions that would further strengthen the protections provided to unaccompanied children. Many of the children that are protected under the TVPRA have escaped traumatic situations such as sweatshop labor and forced prostitution. These children continue to need our help.

Over ten years ago, I introduced the Unaccompanied Alien Child Protection Act to ensure that children receive humane and appropriate treatment while in the custody of the United States government. This bill was included in the 2008 TVPA reauthorization. As a result, I am eager to hear from today's witnesses about the progress that has been made in this important area.

In closing, I look forward to working with my colleagues on this Committee to move this bipartisan legislation forward in the near future.

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