

**Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa  
Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
Hearing: “Human Trafficking in the United States: Protecting the Victim”  
February 24, 2015**

I’d like to welcome you all to today’s hearing on human trafficking. Trafficking, which involves the buying and selling of human beings to profit from their labor or sexual degradation, is a crime with life-shattering effects for many of its victims.

Reliable data on the number of human trafficking victims within our country’s borders is not readily available. But there are some things we do know about this form of modern day slavery. We know, for example, that the United States is a source, transit and destination country for individuals who are being trafficked.

We know that human trafficking occurs in every state and that it affects both U.S. citizens and noncitizens. We know that, at least within the United States, noncitizens are more likely to be found in labor trafficking. We know, too, that women and girls may be especially likely to be targets of certain forms of trafficking.

Experts tell us that many of the U.S. citizen victims of sex trafficking are teenagers. Up to 100,000 minors are being sexually trafficked in the United States each year, according to the Polaris Project. Through threats or deceit, human traffickers force the most vulnerable members of society into servitude to meet the demand for cheap labor and sex workers.

The good news is that we have made some progress in combating human trafficking since 1994, when one of our hearing witnesses was being exploited as a 14-year old. Two decades ago, there were no federal anti-trafficking laws on the books. I am pleased to have played a role in the enactment, 15 years ago, of the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act. I voted for the law when it was first being debated by Congress in 2000, and I have worked with my colleagues on several occasions since then to make sure it was extended.

In addition, today, every state has a law outlawing trafficking. Numerous states updated their human trafficking laws in just the last year.

But much work remains to be done, particularly to protect our most vulnerable youths from traffickers and to curb the demand for sex trafficking. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, “experts widely agree that any efforts to reduce the prevalence of child sex trafficking—as well as other forms of trafficking—should address not only the supply, but also the demand.” I hope that our witnesses can shed some light on this issue. I also hope to hear from our witnesses about two bipartisan bills, S. 166 and S. 178, now pending before this committee.

S. 178, which I have cosponsored, is known as the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. If enacted, it would ensure that additional resources are available to survivors of both sex and labor trafficking to aid in their recovery. S. 178 also would help fight demand for domestic sex trafficking by ensuring that any person who is trafficking an adult or purchasing a child for sex

will be punished under the full force of the law. It has the endorsement of well over 100 organizations.

The other bill, S. 166, is the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act. This bill recognizes that children trafficked for sex in the United States should not be regarded as child prostitutes. It embraces the principle that there is no such thing as a “child prostitute,” only children who are victims of sexual violence and trafficking.

Everyone in this room is in agreement about the need to stop the horrendous crime of human trafficking and the importance of supporting its victims in their efforts to heal. I look forward to working with those of you here today on policy options that will help us put an end, once and for all, to the suffering caused by human trafficking.

-30-