



January 11, 2018

*Today, Representatives Jim Himes (D-Conn.), Lois Frankel (D-Fla.), Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), David Schweikert (R-Ariz.), Ted Poe (R-Tex.), Randy Weber (R-Tex.) and Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) reintroduced the Visa Transparency Anti-Trafficking Act, a bipartisan bill designed to shed light on the intersection of human trafficking and the temporary foreign worker visa system. The International Labor Recruitment Working Group (ILRWG) and the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) issued the following statement in support of the legislation:*

“We applaud House and Senate members for championing legislation that would shine light on a broken patchwork of policies and regulations that gives unscrupulous recruiters and employers license to exploit internationally recruited temporary workers as cheap labor and subject them to exploitation and abuse. In the ugliest form of exploitation, these workers become victims of sexual abuse, forced labor, or modern slavery.

“Every year, temporary workers arrive in the U.S. from other countries to fulfill a wide range of important roles in our economy and communities – from advancing technology innovation, teaching our children, providing healthcare services, caring for our children and homes, to landscaping our lawns, golf courses and parks, growing and producing fruits, vegetables, meat, and seafood, and supporting tourist communities, among many others. Like all workers, they are striving to support themselves and their families, contributing to our communities, and are entitled to basic human rights.

“Flaws in work visa programs leave internationally-recruited workers shackled to their employers through debt bondage, intimidation, and fear of retaliation if they try to leave or seek justice. Too often, they are charged exorbitant recruitment fees that place them into conditions of debt-bondage, or are fraudulently misled about the nature and dangers of the work they will be engaging in. Lack of transparency enables unscrupulous recruiters and employers to act with impunity.

“The Visa Transparency Anti-Trafficking Act would pull back the curtain, requiring public reporting that will provide insights into who employers are, where workers come from, and the terms and conditions of employment. Achieving this kind of transparency would enable greater public scrutiny and provide information that is critical for worker centers and advocacy groups striving to end worker abuse and human trafficking. The bill’s passage and enactment would be a critical step toward ensuring all workers are treated with dignity and freedom at work.

“We thank Representatives Jim Himes (D-Conn.), Lois Frankel (D-Fla.), Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), David Schweikert (R-Ariz.), Ted Poe (R-Tex.), Randy Weber (R-Tex.) and Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) for introducing this legislation.”

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**The International Labor Working Group (ILRWG)** is an alliance of organizations across labor sectors that works alongside internationally-recruited workers, analyzes labor markets and economic conditions, and advocates for all working people in this country. See a full list of ILRWG members at [www.fairlaborrecruitment.wordpress.com](http://www.fairlaborrecruitment.wordpress.com)

**The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST)** is a U.S. based coalition that advocates for solutions to prevent and end all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery in the U.S. and around the world. ATEST is comprised of the following organizations: the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST), Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), Free the Slaves, National Network for Youth (NN4Y), Polaris, Safe Horizon, Solidarity Center, Verité, and Vital Voices Global Partnership. [www.endslaveryandtrafficking.org](http://www.endslaveryandtrafficking.org)