

THE SEX TRAFFICKING DEMAND REDUCTION ACT

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Prevention efforts are essential to eradication of the scourge of human trafficking. The international community, scholars, NGOs, International Organizations, human trafficking experts, and other governments have all recognized that one of the most critical components of preventing human trafficking from occurring is reducing the demand for trafficked persons. This bill would amend the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to reflect the need to prevent sex trafficking by reducing the demand for commercial sex.

THE PROBLEM

It has been the longstanding position of the United States to reduce the demand for sex trafficking victims. There is also a broad international consensus on the necessity of demand reduction efforts to prevent human trafficking. The United Nations and the European Union have established protocols and directives expressly addressing the need to prevent human trafficking by reducing demand for trafficking victims. These policies are founded in a body of research demonstrating the correlation between the adoption of legislation that criminalizes demand and reductions in sex trafficking. For example, case studies published by researchers Niklas Jakobsson and Andreas Kotsadam support the possibility of a causal link between criminalizing buying sex and reduced human trafficking. Jakobsson and Kotsadam found that the trafficking of persons for commercial sexual exploitation is less prevalent in countries where prostitution is illegal and more prevalent in countries where prostitution is legalized.

Unfortunately, the lack of rigor in addressing demand in the State Department's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) reports has negative effects on the prevention of human trafficking around the globe and inhibits progress that could be made if proper evaluation and reporting were taking place. This bill provides a simple solution by making the prohibition of the purchase of sex (which the U.S. has done itself) a requirement for meeting the TIP process's criteria of "making serious and sustained efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex." The Trafficking Victims Protection Act already requires TIP to look at a country's efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts, but this bill would make it clear that these efforts should include an actual prohibition on the purchase of commercial sex acts or implementation of a policy to that end.

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- The annually published TIP Report, mandated by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, has been highly effective in pressuring foreign countries to bolster their anti-trafficking measures and coordinating the international response to the modern slave trade.
- The *Sex Trafficking Demand Reduction Act* amends the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to ensure that the TIP Report includes efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts under its minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.
- When making country determination in its annual report, the TIP Office will consider whether the government of a country has made efforts to prohibit the purchase of commercial sex acts, educate buyers of commercial sex on how traffickers exploit prostituted persons for human trafficking, reduce demand for participation in international sex tourism by nationals of the country