



for immediate release

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## **U.S. Congresswoman Linda Smith called to address Congressional Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking briefing**

Vancouver, WA -- Linda Smith, Founder and President of Shared Hope International, will address a Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) Congressional briefing on July 19, 2010.

The former U.S. Congresswoman (1994-98), from Vancouver, Wash., has been asked to address the Congressional briefing, called by the Victims' Rights Caucus and Human Trafficking Caucus, in support of H.R. 5575. The bill - the Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Deterrence and Victims Support Act of 2010 - provides the framework for targeted and effective solutions to DMST in the United States, and was introduced by Representatives Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Christopher Smith (R-NJ).

"The bill introduced by Congressmen Maloney and Smith recognizes that our young girls and boys are being victimized on a daily basis, and law enforcement and social service providers lack the resources necessary to care for them," remarked Linda Smith, Founder and President of Shared Hope International.

H.R. 5575 authorizes large block grants to create a comprehensive, victim-centered approach to addressing the sex trafficking of minors. The grants would be used both for law enforcement activities and direct services to survivors in up to six regionally diverse locations within the United States. The bill's second objective is to provide funding to implement improvements to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system that are required in order to receive federal funding. The NCIC system is used by federal, state and local law enforcement to track information about missing and exploited children, including runaway children. The bill encourages states to track information about children who are at high risk for sex trafficking, with the goal of using that information to provide a more protective response to those children.

### **Congressional Briefing Notice: Domestic Sex Trafficking of Minors**

*hosted by Victims' Rights Caucus and Human Trafficking Caucus*

Monday, July 19, 2010, 2-3 p.m.

2220 Rayburn House Office Building

#### **Speakers:**

Linda Smith (U.S. Congress, 1994-98), Founder/President, Shared Hope International

Det. Sgt. Ryan Long, Seattle PD/FBI Innocence Lost Task Force

Ernie Allen, President and CEO, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Emily Fitchpatrick, Director, Hope House/On Eagles Wings, North Carolina

Sidney Ford, Founder and Executive Director, You Are Never Alone, Maryland

"The National Report on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: America's Prostituted Children", the result of Shared Hope International research funded by the U.S. Department of Justice and presented to Congress in the fall of 2009, revealed a startling reality: men who buy sex with children in the United States escape the label of sex offender



through the exchange of money. The child is seen as the criminal - labeled as a prostitute - not the victim. The men renting their young bodies are rarely arrested for the serious crimes committed against the children.

Smith is the primary author of **The National Report**, and is recognized as a world leader in the fight against sex trafficking. She recently published *Renting Lacy*, a book that shares the darkness of the child sex trafficking underworld in a compelling story. "**The National Report on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: America's Prostituted Children**" is the only nationwide report on this issue.

Shared Hope International has also linked arms with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which states that more than 100,000 of our nation's children are victims of sex trafficking right here in the United States. The National Report assessed domestic minor sex trafficking - the prostitution of America's kids - in 10 U.S. locations, including Dallas, Las Vegas, and Clearwater, Fla.

**ABOUT SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL:**

Shared Hope International, founded in 1998 by Linda Smith, exists to rescue and restore women and children in crisis. We are leaders in a worldwide effort to prevent and eradicate sex trafficking and slavery through education and public awareness.