



MAKING THE GRADE:

Weakest State Legislative Frameworks will be exposed in Report Card Release

Vancouver, WA—On December 1, 2011, Shared Hope International will release ground-breaking research under the **Protected Innocence Initiative**—a comprehensive strategy to respond to child sex trafficking in America. Built upon Shared Hope International’s 12 years working to combat child sex trafficking in the U.S. and abroad, The Protected Innocence Initiative will expose the greatest and weakest state legislative frameworks in the release of 51 Protected Innocence Report Cards (50 states and Washington D.C.), grading state law as it impacts or relates to domestic minor sex trafficking. Prepare your readers for the release of their state grade!

Under the Protected Innocence Initiative, we will release an analysis of each state’s laws by Shared Hope International and the American Center for Law & Justice and provide recommendations as a blueprint for legal development and change.

“Each state’s laws show serious omissions in protective provisions for child victims, and lack strength to prosecute the men who rent the bodies of other men’s children,” said Linda Smith, Founder and President of Shared Hope International. “Early in our research it was clear that responses to child sex trafficking must originate at the state level. The **Protected Innocence Initiative** begins by establishing the base policies needed to assure a uniform state by state treatment of prostituted children as victims and the criminalization of those who buy and sell that innocence.”

COVERAGE IDEAS

To assist in your coverage and localize the impact of these 51 Protected Innocence Challenge Report Cards, we’ve assembled a three-part series of story ideas aligned to the six areas of **Protected Innocence Legislative Framework** categories:

- Criminalization of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking
- Criminal provisions for demand
- Criminal provisions for traffickers
- Criminal provisions for facilitators
- Protective provisions for the child victims
- Criminal justice tools for investigation and prosecutions

Part 1 - Criminalization of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking/Criminal provisions for demand:

IDEA: Pursue a piece on a victim not being charged for prostitution – or a story on a victim who HAS been charged for prostitution and consequently loses access to services and justice. This story is a reminder that being charged potentially leaves the victim without access to the full range of remedies and protections and/or services.

IDEA: Produce a story, using the example of a buyer receiving a sentence under a “buyer of sex with a minor” law, as opposed to a sentence of “solicitation of prostitution.” Show the difference in sentencing between the two charges, which should be a stark revelation to viewers/readers.

Part 2 - Criminal provisions for traffickers/Criminal provisions for facilitators:

IDEA: Show an example of “compelling prostitution of a minor”, or “promotion of pornographic/obscene materials of a child under 18”. How many of your viewers know that the traffickers can be men AND women?

IDEA: Do a story of promoting or selling child pornography, or employment of a child in a sexually-oriented commercial business (nude/topless business). Age verification measures are rarely taken or enforced at adult entertainment establishments to protect minors from being used in commercial sexual entertainment. Is your community guilty?

**Part 3 - Protective provisions for the child victims/Criminal justice tools for investigation and prosecutions:**

IDEA: Produce a story of a child being required to testify against her pimp/john, even though she is under the age of 18 and is thus the victim. Also produce a story showing the lack of adequate facilities/protections, etc., for victims.

IDEA: Produce a story on a recent law enforcement sting that utilized effective criminal justice tools like the use of a decoy, wiretapping, or single party consent. Don't have any examples? Maybe your state law is hindering law enforcement and prosecutors from bringing justice to perpetrators by banning the use of these critical tools.

"We are calling on state legislatures to craft laws that will ensure all children are kept safe from commercial sexual exploitation through prostitution, pornography and sexual performance, and when victimized by traffickers and people who buy sex from these children, ensuring these criminals receive the justice they deserve," said Smith.

ABOUT THE PROTECTED INNOCENCE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK: The Protected Innocence Legislative Framework is the legal analysis tool of the Protected Innocence Initiative, a holistic strategy to promote zero tolerance for child sex trafficking. In partnership with the American Center for Law and Justice, Shared Hope International conducted a comprehensive analysis of each state's existing laws based on six areas of law critical to protecting from and the responding to domestic minor sex trafficking. The results of this analysis laid the foundation for the Protected Innocence Report Card, which grades the level of protection in each state. The Protected Innocence Legislative Framework solely evaluates a state's existing laws and does not evaluate enforcement or implementation.

The methodology was vetted by experts in the anti-trafficking field including Ambassador Mark Lagon (U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons 2007-2009) and directors from the following organizations: the National District Attorneys Association; American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law; the Protection Project at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies; ECPAT-USA; Children at Risk, Houston, Texas; and A Future Not a Past, Atlanta, Georgia.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Loren Wohlgemuth Jr.
360.693.8100 office / 503.957.7347 cell
loren@sharedhope.org

ABOUT SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL: Shared Hope International was founded in 1998, by former U.S. Congresswoman Linda Smith, and 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 using a three-pronged strategy: prevent, rescue & restore, and bring justice. For more information about Shared Hope International, and the *Protected Innocence Initiative*, go to www.sharedhope.org.