



MAKING THE GRADE: PROTECTED INNOCENCE INITIATIVE COMES TO ARIZONA

Grades State's Ability to Protect Its Children from Sex Trafficking

Vancouver, WA—Arizona will receive a mediocre "C" grade next week regarding domestic minor sex trafficking, when its report card will be detailed March 8 in a Phoenix press conference. Arizona's laws have been analyzed using the Protected Innocence Legislative Framework for the level of protection provided to children in the state from domestic minor sex trafficking.

Shared Hope's analysis of Arizona laws revealed legislative gaps, creating vulnerabilities for the children of Arizona to fall prey to traffickers. While the "C" grade commends strengths in Arizona laws, it also provides legislators and the community a framework to improve the state's response to victims of domestic minor sex trafficking.

"The Protected Innocence Initiative report card shows that we still have work to do regarding the safety of 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 standard treatment of prostituted children as victims and the treatment of those who buy and sell that innocence as the serious criminals they are."

Arizona Protected Innocence Report Card Press Conference

WHEN: Tuesday, March 8, 2011
12:30 p.m.

WHERE: Arizona Capitol Museum
Historic Senate Chamber
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007

SPEAKERS: Linda Smith, President and Founder, Shared Hope International
Jodi Liggett, CEO, Arizona Foundation for Women

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 Arizona's existing laws based on six areas of law critical to protecting and 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 Arizona.

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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.