



SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL EXPOSES NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN LOOK AT CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN AMERICA

Vancouver, WA—On Dec. 1, 2011 in San Antonio, Texas, Shared Hope International will release groundbreaking research that will expose how our states are responding to the sex trafficking of American children in every state. Under the national **Protected Innocence Initiative**—the first proactive research to effectively respond to child sex trafficking in America— Shared Hope will expose the greatest and weakest state legislative frameworks in the release of 51 individual state Report Cards (50 states and Washington D.C.), grading state law as it impacts or relates to domestic minor sex trafficking.

The findings are surprising as we uncover some of the weakest state laws and laws that appear to leave those who exploit children undeterred. A comprehensive analysis of state law and resulting recommendations will supplement the Report Card and serve as a blueprint for legislative action.

“Each state’s laws show omissions in protective provisions for child victims, and lack strong laws 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 establishes the essential legislative framework that attempts to harmonize the state’s response to the treatment of prostituted children and emphasize the appropriate prosecution of the buyer.”

Protected Innocence Initiative – National Release

Press Breakfast

When: 8-9 a.m.

Thursday, Dec. 1, 2011

Where: Bonham C, Grand Hyatt

600 E. Market Street

San Antonio, Texas 78205

Speaker: Linda Smith, President and Founder, Shared Hope International

MEDIA CONTACT:

Loren Wohlgemuth Jr.

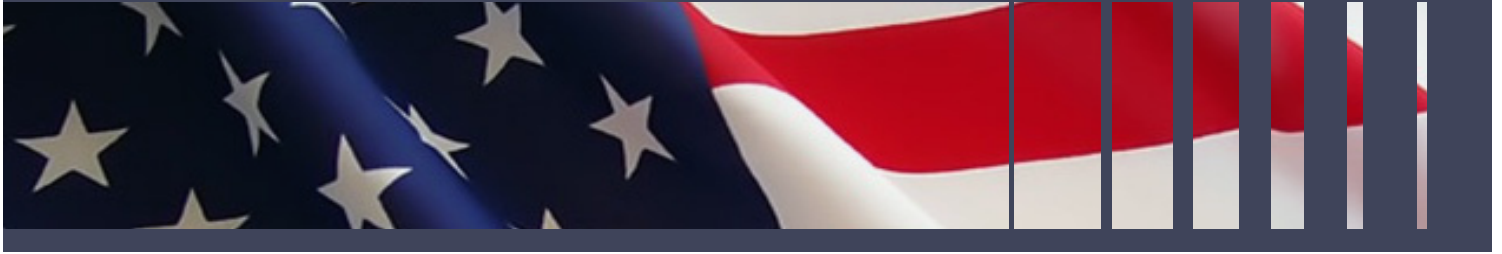
360.693.8100 office / 503.957.7347 cell

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.

PROTECTED INNOCENCE INITIATIVE

STATE ACTION. NATIONAL CHANGE.



THE PROTECTED INNOCENCE INITIATIVE

The Protected Innocence Initiative is a comprehensive strategy to promote zero tolerance for child sex trafficking. Under this initiative, Shared Hope International will release fifty-one individual Report Cards based on the Protected Innocence Legislative Framework, an analysis of state laws performed by the American Center for Law & Justice and Shared Hope International. The Report Cards set a national standard of protection against domestic minor sex trafficking. Recognizing that responses to domestic minor sex trafficking must originate at the state level, the Protected Innocence Initiative provides a blueprint for policy makers to establish the foundational policies needed in each state to create a safe environment for children.

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 Person 2007-09) and directors from the following organizations: the National District Attorneys Association; American Bar Association (ABA) Center on Children and the Law; ECPAT-USA; the Protection Project at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (Washington, D.C.); Children at Risk (Houston, Texas); and A Future. Not a Past. (Atlanta, Georgia).

“Broken systems of response to victims must also be fixed to ensure that the commercially sexually exploited children are treated as victims and provided with remedies through the law to recapture their lives and futures.”

- The Protected Innocence Legislative Framework Methodology

DOMESTIC MINOR SEX TRAFFICKING DEFINED

Domestic minor sex trafficking as defined by the national Trafficking Victims Protection Act is the “recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act,” where the person is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident under the age of 18 years.

- There is no requirement to prove force, fraud or coercion was used to secure the victim’s compliance.
- The average age a child is lured or forced into prostitution is 13 years old.
- Commercial sex acts include the use of a child in prostitution, pornography, and/or sexual performance.
- Experts estimate at least 100,000 American juveniles are victimized through prostitution in the U.S. each year.





SETTING THE STANDARD TO PROTECT CHILDREN

The Protected Innocence Legislative Framework outlines six areas of law critical to protecting children and responding to domestic minor sex trafficking. Each state's existing laws will be measured against standards that create a safe environment for children. A formula which measures the level of protection afforded by state laws regarding sex trafficking of children will be applied to grade the state legislative framework; it does not evaluate enforcement or implementation.

The Protected Innocence Legislative Framework categories include:

1. Criminalization of domestic minor sex trafficking
2. Criminal provisions for demand (buyers)
3. Criminal provisions for traffickers (pimps)
4. Criminal provisions for facilitators (hotels, transports, websites etc.)
5. Protective provisions for the child victims
6. Criminal justice tools for investigation and prosecutions

NATIONAL RELEASE

Our high impact national release will be in San Antonio, Texas in late November, coinciding with the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) meeting. During these parallel events, Shared Hope will release our findings regarding child sex trafficking across the nation and recognize those state Attorney Generals who have made efforts to combat the issue.

STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

Advocates in each state will be encouraged to use Shared Hope International's policy recommendations to influence legislative change, collaborate with Shared Hope International to generate public awareness and oversee the ongoing advancement of the Protected Innocence Initiative. Shared Hope International will facilitate face-to-face and online training for first responders, law enforcement, and other essential personnel who deal directly with victims or perpetrators. Trainings will center on prevention, prosecution and protection to combat domestic minor sex trafficking.

ABOUT SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL

Shared Hope International exists to rescue and restore women and children in crisis. For over a decade, we have been leaders in a worldwide effort to prevent and eradicate sex trafficking through education, public awareness and partnering with local groups to help women and children enslaved in the sex trade.

To access the Protected Innocence Legislative Framework Methodology and each completed Report Card please visit: www.sharedhope.org/ReportCards.aspx

