



## AG Abbott to receive U.S. Pathbreaker Award

**Vancouver, WA**—Shared Hope International congratulates Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott as a recipient of the Pathbreaker Award.

Attorney General Abbott was selected as a Pathbreaker Award recipient for his leadership in ensuring comprehensive laws to secure justice, rights and services for victims of child sex trafficking. In March 2011, Shared Hope International graded Texas' legislative response to child sex trafficking as a "C." Since 2007, the Texas Attorney General has worked collaboratively with his colleagues to ensure that the legal response to child sex trafficking would be strengthened. On December 1, Shared Hope International will announce how far Texas has come in tightening the safety net for children through improved legislation in 2011.

"As demonstrated through his perseverance to see this legislation passed, Attorney General Abbott has shown incredible leadership to ensure that Texas provides an example for others states by institutionalizing a comprehensive framework of response," said President and Founder of Shared Hope International, Linda Smith. "I am pleased to know that Texas has an attorney general that not only recognizes the issue of human trafficking, but ensures that the legislative response is a robust deterrent against sex traffickers."

"The Texas Attorney General's office worked tirelessly this year to help pass laws that will continue to ensure Texas remains hostile territory for human traffickers," said Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott. "We worked to increase penalties for traffickers and continue to foster cooperation among law enforcement to provide crucial new tools to combat human trafficking in the State of Texas. I am honored to receive the Pathbreaker Award from an organization who, like me, has worked so hard to eradicate human trafficking and protect innocent children."

The Pathbreaker Award was initiated in 2003 as recognition for pioneering individuals who fought for laws and response systems in countries identified by the U.S. Department of State as lagging behind in addressing trafficking in persons. With support from the U.S. Department of State, Shared Hope's efforts to fight the sex trafficking of women and children around the world included raising the issue and providing guidance and direction to these country governments. As sex trafficking was revealed as a growing threat in the U.S., Shared Hope found their efforts needed at home.

As a result, the Pathbreaker Award searched for deserving candidates in the United States. Shared Hope engaged service providers, activists and concerned citizens across the country to nominate attorneys general who have acted to provide a comprehensive legal framework to prevent domestic minor sex trafficking and provide access to justice for those children exploited through the commercial sex industry.

Attorney General Abbott will be presented with the Pathbreaker Award at a ceremony in San Antonio, Texas on November 30, 2011.

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