



National Worker Exploitation Task Force

P.O. Box 66018, Washington D.C. 20035-6018



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Dear Advocacy Organization or Service Provider:

We are writing to invite you to join us in the fight against a form of worker exploitation that many think ended long ago. Though slavery has been illegal in this country since 1865, the intelligence community reports that some 50,000 people are trafficked into the United States each year for forced labor and servitude in such areas as prostitution, sweatshops, domestic service, and migrant farm labor. In response to this emerging problem, the U.S. Departments of Justice and Labor formed the National Worker Exploitation Task Force, a federal interagency effort to combat severe worker exploitation and trafficking in persons.

The mission of the Task Force is to investigate, prosecute, and prevent trafficking in persons and to protect victims of trafficking and other exploitive work practices by ensuring that they receive rightful wages, appropriate services, and assistance. These cases often involve unscrupulous traffickers who recruit and smuggle foreign nationals into the country and force them to work in abominable conditions. Some traffickers force their victims to work for them to repay a smuggling debt. Others lure the victims with false promises of good jobs and glamorous lives, only to force them into servitude upon their arrival in the United States.

The fight against slavery and trafficking is a bipartisan effort. Last fall, Congress passed and the President signed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. This law provides new tools to the federal government to prosecute traffickers, new programs to protect victims of trafficking by shielding them from their abusers, and new avenues to obtain legal immigration status for victims. Information about the Task Force and an Internet link to the new legislation can be found at www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/wetf.htm.

Neither government nor the advocacy community can solve this problem alone. We urge you to review the new statutes and alert federal law enforcement if you become aware of trafficking and worker exploitation cases. When traffickers use threats of deportation and jail, victims of trafficking are unlikely to turn to federal law enforcement for help. Recent cases have come to light because victims were discovered by immigrant advocates, child protective workers, and domestic abuse investigators.

We are enclosing fact sheets about the Task Force and a flyer that we encourage you to photocopy and distribute. If you learn of cases in which individuals have been forced into servitude or unlawful working conditions, please call our toll-free complaint line: **1-888-428-7581**. Operators have access to interpreters and can speak with callers in many languages other than English.

Only with your help can we effectively combat modern-day slavery and assist its victims.

Sincerely,

Bill Lann Lee
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Henry A. Solano
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