



Survivor’s Perspective: Develop a thriving funding source to support the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking.

BACKGROUND

Human trafficking survivors are in the best position to speak to policies that have the greatest impact and will effect real change. To be the most effective the council needs funding to support the ongoing work of survivors. We were elated when 2 years ago the President signed into law the Survivors of Human Trafficking Empowerment Act (Sec. 115 of Public Law 114-22), which established this Council to provide advice and recommendations to the Senior Policy Operating Group and the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking. This decision brought our voices to the table. However, enacted statutory language has a sunset clause with the council terminating in 2020. Additionally, the language creating the council currently provides explicit language under Section 115(f)(2) that survivors who are members of the council cannot be compensated for their services. Given that this creates financial hardship for current and future members of the council, this problematic provision needs to be clarified so that in addition to receiving travel expense and per diem, survivor council members can receive compensation for their services to the council. The sunset clause needs to be eliminated so the good work of council continues as survivors voices must always be at the table.

PROPOSED STATUTORY LANGUAGE:

Sec. 115 of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-22) is amended:

(a) In subsection (f)(2) by striking the existing text and inserting the following— “shall receive compensation, including reimbursement of travel expenses and per diem allowance.”

(b) By re-designating subsection (h) as subsection (i), and by inserting—

“(h) —Authorization of appropriations in support of the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking—There is authorized to be appropriated to the State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to carry out the purposes of section 115 of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-22) \$750,000 for each of the fiscal years 2017 through 2020. These funds may be used to provide compensation to Advisory Council members.”

(c) Strike in its entirety section (h)

EXPLANATION OF COMPENSATION:

The authorization would fund at least one full-time FTE to support: the ongoing work of the council; the organizing and convening of Council meetings; Council members travel and incidental expenses; compensation for Council members; production of the annual report required under the act; mental health support for council members; creation of a structure to ensure other survivors outside the Council have a mechanism for providing recommendations to the US government; and other activities authorized by the Act.

WHY WE SHOULD BE COMPENSATED

Survivors should be compensated simply because it is the right thing to do. We come to this movement as experts on this particular issue. Our past experiences of exploitation sometimes leads us to think less of our value especially when it comes to exchanges of money and services. We believe that in paying for services of anyone removes all notions of exploitation. The ethics associated with buying and selling can be honorable if done correctly.

WHO ARE WE?

The National Survivor Network (NSN), a network of trafficking survivors in the United States, was created in February 2011 by the Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST). The NSN's mission is to bring together a community of survivors of human trafficking, by creating a platform for survivor-led advocacy, peer to peer mentorship, and empowerment that embraces all survivors, regardless of gender, age, nationality or type of trafficking experience. Members include men and women survivors of human trafficking from 32 different states and 20 different countries.