



A partisan political proposal pending before the Senate at the request of the White House this week will strip protections for children coming to the U.S. to flee violence, human trafficking, and other forms of abuse. The bill would undo provisions of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) to protect Unaccompanied Children (UAC), which was reauthorized by Congress and signed by the president.

The National Survivor Network beseeches Congress to reject the Central American Minors Protection Act of 2019, which is embedded in the administration's proposal to reopen federal agencies that are currently closed. This draconian new procedures for vulnerable children from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras will only perpetuate vulnerabilities to being trafficked. This bill stifles our laws to protect children from trafficking in a political ploy to appease the lowest inclinations of the most racist in our society.

Against international law, the bill demands children apply for U.S. asylum outside the U.S., on their own, and pay an application fee. This undue burden violates U.S. law, providing asylum seekers refuge within U.S. borders as their cases are adjudicated, and leaves children vulnerable to exploitation. Children would be limited to apply for only one type of immigration protection even if they are eligible for multiple avenues of immigration relief under applicable law. The bill creates dramatically lowered quotas for how many children could apply each year. Not to mention a one time only process for three years approval if all the conditions are met. Children will be required to have a "qualified adult" already inside the U.S. to be eligible for protection. Such provisions decimate trafficking and asylum protections for Central American children, particularly the most vulnerable, who do not have a parent or guardian in the U.S. These provisions are being rushed to a Senate floor vote without the benefit of public hearings or the input of government staffers, many of whom have been furloughed.

The TVPA has been the cornerstone of America's efforts to protect victims and the vulnerable. The law's provisions have been crafted through bipartisan efforts over many years. Its safeguards for vulnerable migrant children must not be undone. We urge Congress to reject this harmful bill to obliterate protections for unaccompanied children, leaving them vulnerable to serious harm and human trafficking. These children are not political pawns for people who proclaim to be ending a "crisis" in the U.S. The continued assault on migrants, on DACA recipients, Temporary Protected Status holders, and UAC only enforces the belief that holding a country hostage for a wall that has been proven to not be effective time and time again has nothing to do with legitimate crisis and is only a monument to white supremacy. The National Survivor Network requests Congress listen to the experts on human trafficking and deny unequivocally these atrocious attempts to suppress protections for the most vulnerable seeking asylum and refuge in the U.S.