

# Cast

COALITION TO  
ABOLISH SLAVERY  
& TRAFFICKING

## How Do You Create Policy for the Anti-Trafficking Movement that Leads to Real Change?

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Many individuals who learn about the issue of modern-day slavery are inspired to take steps to enact change in their community, at the state, and/or the national level. This is the type of energy and drive we need if we hope to end modern-slavery in our lifetimes. However, poorly thought out and quickly drafted legislation can have unintended consequences or worse yet harm the community you are hoping to assist. It can also drain political energy and will to tackle the harder or more complex changes that are often required to enact real change in the anti-trafficking movement. The responses below provides answers to commonly asked questions by those seeking policy change in the anti-trafficking movement.

***What steps should I take when I want to consider enacting legislative change in the anti-trafficking movement?***

- (1) Talk to your local, state, national, and international experts on human trafficking. They are the organizations and people working on the ground who have likely identified problems they are facing but do not have the time or capacity to work toward legislative changes. Working to create a policy change that has been identified by an individual or organization working in the field is likely to lead to enacting legislation that will have more impact. Check with multiple organizations or individuals to make sure you have identified a pressing problem or issue in the anti-trafficking movement.
- (2) Remember that modern slavery addresses all forms of trafficking – sex and labor; U.S. citizens and foreign nationals; and men, women, and children. Often, proposed legislation will seek to prevent, protect, prosecute, or assist only one subcategory of human trafficking victims. Ask yourself if your proposed legislative strategy can help all types of trafficking victims. If it can, make sure your proposed legislative language or any legislation you support includes protections for all types of victims. Be vocal if you find that your community or state is focusing on only one type of trafficking – as this means that many other victims will remain unidentified and enslaved for longer.
- (3) Make sure to vet and understand the legislative impact of your proposed solution or any legislation you support. Think about the unintended consequences or negative impacts that can result.
- (4) The anti-trafficking framework developed already in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) and subsequent reauthorizations is already robust. Make sure any legislation you work on at the state or national level does not duplicate other measures that have been enacted previously.
- (5) Make sure your proposed change has the resources needed attached or worked into the legislative proposal. Real change usually requires expending additional resources. If

your legislative enactment does not have the appropriate resources attached it will fail to be properly implemented or worse yet could have the unintended consequence of taking money designated to assist one vulnerable population to assist another.

- (6) Real change comes from not just enacting legislation but making sure the legislation on the books is being properly implemented. Consider working on implementing legislation instead of enacting a completely new policy.

Based on my 10 years of experience working in the anti-trafficking movement, my rule of thumb is that real legislative change that has the ability to significantly impact the anti-trafficking movement is hard and must address root causes and bring new resources to the issue. This means that legislative proposals can take years to enact. Don't look for simple quick solutions but join the movement long-term and expect real change to be enacted slowly! It can take two, three, or even five to seven years for change to happen.

***What steps can I take to ensure that anti-trafficking legislation is effectively implemented?***

- (1) At the local, state, and federal level, understand the legislative framework for addressing trafficking that is already enacted.
- (2) Identify a key issue of legislation that you think will impact real change in the anti-trafficking movement based on the criteria describe above and take steps to make sure this provision is effectively implemented and resourced.
- (3) Map the appropriate agency targets at the state and federal level responsible for enacting this policy. At the federal level, agencies as diverse as Department of State; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Justice; Department of Labor; Department of Defense; Department of Education; and Department of Homeland Security, along with many others, might be essential in implementing anti-trafficking policies. Figure out who your key agency target is and the individuals directly responsible for enacting the provision you are targeting.
- (4) Conduct key outreach to ensure that your target provision has: (1) effective implementing regulations or guidance; (2) is properly resourced; (3) has key staff assigned for long-term impact; and (4) if relevant, has proper agency enforcement.

**What resources can I use to better educate myself about policy in the anti-trafficking movement?**

Two national anti-trafficking coalitions – the Freedom Network, USA and the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) – have great resource pages explaining their policy positions and goals. These groups focus on policy changes to end all forms of human trafficking at the national level.

Freedom Network, USA: <http://freedomnetworkusa.org/about-us/policy-advocacy/>  
Alliance to End Slavery & Trafficking (ATEST): <https://endslaveryandtrafficking.org/policy-resources/>

Polaris, which runs the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) has a state-by-state map which shows state profiles based on hotline calls as well as provides summaries on a state-by-state basis of anti-trafficking legislation enacted.

Polaris: <http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy>  
Polaris 2014 State Ratings: <http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/national-policy/state-ratings-on-human-trafficking-law>  
National Human Trafficking Resource Center: <http://traffickingresourcecenter.org/states>

The Uniform Law Commission, in partnership with the American Bar Association, underwent a three-year process to create legislative recommendations for states regarding human trafficking. Of course, all states are different, but starting by asking if your state has this basic anti-trafficking framework in place outlined by the **Uniform Act on the Prevention and Remedies for Human Trafficking** is a good start.

Uniform Law Commission:  
<http://letsendhumantrafficking.org><http://letsendhumantrafficking.org/index.phprg/index.php>

Finally, if you are from California or want to take action there, CAST runs a monthly policy call on California legislation and issues action alerts. CAST's policy priorities come directly from input from its own survivor advisory caucus, as well as the National Survivor Network (NSN).

Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking: <http://www.castla.org/state-legislation>  
National Survivor Network: <http://nationalsurvivornetwork.org>

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