

Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act (H.R. 4307)

Chairman Tim Walberg (R-MI) and Representative Lucy McBath (D-GA)

Background

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery that exists not only in foreign countries but in every state in the United States. This atrocious crime involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to force victims into labor or sexual exploitation.

The International Labor Organization estimated there were 27.6 million victims of forced labor across the globe on any given day in 2022. The National Human Trafficking Hotline's most recent data showed there were 11,999 trafficking cases involving 21,865 victims in the United States in 2024. And according to the Department of Homeland Security, human trafficking is second only to drug trafficking as the most profitable form of international crime. Roughly one in seven endangered runaways reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is likely a victim of child sex trafficking.

Combatting Human Trafficking

More must be done to combat the unthinkable crime of human trafficking and protect the most vulnerable in our society. One practical step is ensuring that federal employees who are most likely to encounter trafficking victims have the training and tools to identify and respond to these crimes.

The Department of Labor (DOL) investigators are often on the frontlines. As they examine wage, hour, and workplace violations, they encounter signs of forced labor or exploitation. Wage and Hour Division investigators alone worked with criminal law enforcement agencies in 44 human trafficking cases in Fiscal Year 2023, making referrals, receiving referrals for investigation under WHD laws, and assisting with the computation of restitution for victims. *Congress must take action to ensure DOL employees continue to be educated to recognize patterns of human trafficking and refer cases to law enforcement.*

The Solution

To strengthen efforts to combat human trafficking and protect vulnerable adults and children, Reps. Tim Walberg (R-MI) and Lucy McBath (D-GA) introduced the *Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act* (H.R. 4307). This bipartisan legislation would:

- Direct the Secretary of Labor to develop and implement effective training to ensure DOL enforcement personnel continue to be educated on identifying and responding to human trafficking.
- Ensure DOL employees are aware of how to refer potential cases of human trafficking to the Department of Justice and other appropriate authorities.
- Require a new annual report to Congress on DOL's trafficking-prevention efforts, which will help guide the Committee's future oversight efforts.

The *Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act* passed the House unanimously with overwhelming bipartisan support last Congress, and this Congress, it passed the Committee unanimously.