USCSAHT Members
August 2019 Legislative Visit Materials
Planning a Visit with Your Legislator

Before Your Visit

Schedule the meeting

• Call your Member’s local office to request a meeting.
• Make sure to tell them how many others would like to attend.
• If the member is unavailable, ask to meet with staff who work on human trafficking issues.
• You may have to send an email or fill out a form.
• Don’t be discouraged if you need to follow-up for a response.

Be knowledgeable about the person you are visiting

• Party affiliation.
• Term in office.
• Position on the issue you are discussing.
• What committees is she/he on.
• Thank the member for other similar bills the Member has supported.

Know your bill

• Know the bill name and number.
• Where it is in the process.
• The names of the sponsors and co-sponsors.
• Other legislators supporting similar legislation.

Establish goals and objectives of the meeting

• Remember this is one step in the process of establishing an on-going relationship.
• Be clear about your “ask” – Will he/she:
• Support/oppose the bill?
• Co-sponsor the bill?
• Move it forward in the process? (ex. Committee to floor)
• Help to get a fellow legislator(s) to support the bill?
Get your script together

- Assign roles.
- Remember the objective of the meeting.
- Develop and tailor your talking points.

At Your Visit

Arrive early and as a group

- Remember that you are not the only people meeting with the legislator and staff that day. Arriving early may give you extra time and always makes you look more professional.
- Late group members should politely wait outside the office rather than interrupt a meeting in progress.

Introduce yourselves

- Briefly introduce yourselves individually and be sure to include your organization’s name and where you are from and any relationship to the legislator.
- Have your group leader explain that you represent an important voice in your legislator’s district—U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking.

Sample Introduction to Legislator or Staff Member

Hello Mr./Ms. ________. I’d like to first thank you for taking the time to meet with us today.

My name is ____________. Our group represents U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking. During our time with you today, we’d like to discuss our concerns about and proposals for addressing Human Trafficking.

Ask each of the members of the group to introduce herself.

Keep your presentation simple

- **Create your talking points in advance.** Know your facts and have your information easily at hand. Stay away from using acronyms.
- **Tell powerful stories.** Stories are one of the most effective ways to leave a lasting impact on legislators and congressional staff. A powerful story creates an emotional connection to an issue and links it to deeper values and personal experience.
• **Seek concrete commitments.** Come prepared to ask your legislator to take specific actions in support of your issues (e.g., introduce or cosponsor legislation, vote in favor or against a specific bill, communicate support to House or Senate leadership or head of a specific committee). Seek clear yes or no responses to your “asks”, and be prepared to follow up.

• **Stay positive.** If a legislator or their staff ask questions you cannot answer that day, feel free to let them know that you could send them that information.

• **Stay polite.** You might disagree with a legislator or staffer; if so, make your point and move on. You want to inform them of your position and make them feel comfortable going to you as a source of information in their district.

• **Listen well.** Let them ask questions. You may find new opportunities to interact with the legislator.

### After Your Visit

• Remember to get the staffers’ business cards.
• Consider asking them to take a photo with your group.
• Send a thank you note and include any follow-up information that you promised during the visit.
• Fill out and send the “Report Back Form”
Advocacy Priorities 116th Congress

Transform unjust policies
Policies and practices that harm survivors of human trafficking or threaten migrants or others who are vulnerable to human trafficking must be exposed and rejected.

Demand survivor informed policy
Persons who have been trafficked should have the opportunity to provide advice and recommendations to legislators and policy makers in order to improve U.S. policy and programming efforts.

Address root causes
Governments and nongovernmental organization must be encouraged to adopt a human rights-based approach to human trafficking that addresses the roots causes of trafficking and the exploitation of women and men and girls and boys.

Invest in girls and women
The U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development must be encouraged to promote programs that build the capacity of countries’ national and local legal and policy frameworks to prevent discrimination against girls and women, guarantee their access to quality engendered education, and secure their property, social security, land tenure, and inheritance rights.

Require business transparency
Corporations must be held accountable for any forced or child labor in their labor recruitment and hiring and in their supply and distribution chains. Businesses should be required to publicly disclose their efforts to eliminate human trafficking and child labor in their business operations.
We ask you to Support and Co-Sponsor the Central American Women and Children Protection Act of 2019, and we urge inclusion of a Congressional finding on the human trafficking of Central American women and children.

Background
The bipartisan H.R. 2836 was introduced in May by Representatives Norma Torres (D-CA) and Ann Wagner (R-MO). It was just recently passed by the House of Representatives as an amendment to H.R. 2615 United States-Northern Triangle Enhanced Engagement Act.

S. 1781 was introduced in June by Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) and already has six co-sponsors with support from both Democrats and Republicans. The legislation has been referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for further action.

The legislation would authorize appropriations for the Department of State for the next three years to provide assistance to the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to increase protection of women and children in their homes and communities and reduce female homicides, domestic violence, and sexual assault.

No funds would go directly to the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala or Honduras and options to suspend all funding are provided. Funds will be provided to a recipient entity.

The bill would:
- Authorize the U.S. Secretary of State to enter into bilateral “Women and Children Protection Compacts” with the three Northern Triangle countries to establish plans that would:
  - Strengthen their criminal justice systems and civil protection courts to protect women and children and serve victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse and neglect and hold perpetrators accountable;
  - Create and sustain safe communities to prevent and deter violence against women and children;
  - Ensure schools are safe and promote prevention and early detection of gender-based and domestic abuse within communities; and
  - Provide security within the region to families and unaccompanied children fleeing domestic, gang, or drug violence.

- Provide $20,000,000 (House bill) or $10,000,000 (Senate bill) each of three years (2020, 2021, 2022) to carry out the plans outlined above if the countries enter into the Compacts.

- Require reporting to Congress, including on the implementation of the compacts and information on gender-based violence, child welfare systems for unaccompanied children, violence against children, and the capacity of police, prosecution services to combat violence against women and children in the countries.
Why We Support this Legislation
This bill addresses the threats to many women and children in the Northern Triangle who, because of failed or illegitimate states, are frequent victims of lawlessness and violence.

We are particularly concerned about the vulnerability of the people in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras who are living in violence and fear, in sickness and hunger, without employment and without many options.

This vulnerability often leads to exploitation of all kinds, including labor and sex trafficking, particularly for those who are forced to flee their homes in search of safety.

The Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala have among the highest homicide rates in the world. In 2017, there were 60 homicides per 100,000 people in El Salvador, 43.6 homicides per 100,000 people in Honduras, and 26.1 homicides per 100,000 people in Guatemala.

Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador are characterized by a high prevalence of drug- and gang-related violence, murder, and crimes involving gender-based violence. The region also has high rates of domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual assault.

Central America ranks high among regions of the world for female homicides. A combined 801 women were victims of homicide in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala in 2017 alone, according to the United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime.

El Salvador and Honduras are both among the top 3 countries in the world with the highest child homicides rates, with more than 22 and 32 deaths per 100,000 children respectively, according to the nongovernmental organization Save the Children.

Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador governments allow impunity for perpetrators of violence against women and children, with less than 10 percent of reported cases resulting in conviction.

This bill will help address some of these protection concerns in the region.

We also encourage inclusion of a Congressional finding in Section 2 of the bill to highlight the vulnerability to trafficking of Central American women and children, particularly those forced to flee their homes. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees and nongovernmental organizations have clearly documented these vulnerabilities.

Contact
Jennifer Reyes Lay, Executive Director, U.S. Catholic Sisters against Human Trafficking, Jennifer@sistersagainsttrafficking.org, 267-332-7768.
Talking Points
Central American Women and Children Protection Act S. 1781 / H.R. 2836
These are for internal use only and should NOT be shared with Members of Congress or staff.

We ask you to Support and Co-Sponsor the Central American Women and Children Protection Act of 2019, and we urge inclusion of a Congressional finding on the human trafficking of Central American women and children.

Background
The bipartisan H.R. 2836 was introduced in May by Representatives Norma Torres (D-CA) and Ann Wagner (R-MO). It was just recently passed by the House of Representatives as an amendment to H.R. 2615 United States-Northern Triangle Enhanced Engagement Act. When you visit with your Representatives please ask if they voted for this bill and if so, thank them for their support, explaining the connection between migration and human trafficking.

S. 1781 was introduced in June by Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) and already has six co-sponsors with support from both Democrats and Republicans. The legislation has been referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for further action. When you meet with your senators please ask them to support and co-sponsor this bill as well as include a Congressional finding on the human trafficking of Central American women and children. If your Senator serves on the foreign relations committee, please inquire as to the status of this bill and push for a positive report out of committee.

The legislation would authorize appropriations for the Department of State for the next three years to provide assistance to the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to increase protection of women and children in their homes and communities and reduce female homicides, domestic violence, and sexual assault.

No funds would go directly to the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala or Honduras and options to suspend all funding are provided. Funds will be provided to a recipient entity.

Introduce USCSAHT and Yourself
- United States Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking is a collaborative, faith-based national network that works to eradicate modern-day slavery.
- Explain your own commitment to anti-human trafficking work. Share something of your own experience and contribution to anti-trafficking work.

Address the Nexus between Migration and Human Trafficking
- Immigrants are particularly susceptible to trafficking because of their precarious circumstances.
- Undocumented immigrants are at even greater risk because they live in constant fear of apprehension, detention, and deportation.
- Increased immigration enforcement only serves to push immigrants further into the shadows and gives a chilling advantage to traffickers who use people’s immigration status as a tool to exploit their labor or coerce them into participating in the sex trade.
• The decision to drastically decrease refugee admissions places these children, women, and men, already among the most vulnerable and desperate people on earth, at even greater risk of forced labor and human trafficking.

Why Support this Legislation
• This bill addresses the threats to many women and children in the Northern Triangle who, because of failed or illegitimate states, are frequent victims of lawlessness and violence.

• We are particularly concerned about the vulnerability of the people in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras who are living in violence and fear, in sickness and hunger, without employment and without many options.

• This vulnerability often leads to exploitation of all kinds, including labor and sex trafficking, particularly for those who are forced to flee their homes in search of safety.

• The Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala have among the highest homicide rates in the world. In 2017, there were 60 homicides per 100,000 people in El Salvador, 43.6 homicides per 100,000 people in Honduras, and 26.1 homicides per 100,000 people in Guatemala.

• Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador are characterized by a high prevalence of drug- and gang-related violence, murder, and crimes involving gender-based violence. The region also has high rates of domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual assault.

• Central America ranks high among regions of the world for female homicides. A combined 801 women were victims of homicide in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala in 2017 alone, according to the United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime.

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• Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador governments allow impunity for perpetrators of violence against women and children, with less than 10 percent of reported cases resulting in conviction.

Asks:
We ask the Senator to support and co-sponsor the Central American Women and Children Protection Act of 2019 S. 1781. We also encourage inclusion of a Congressional finding in Section 2 of the bill to highlight the vulnerability to trafficking of Central American women and children, particularly those forced to flee their homes. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees and nongovernmental organizations have clearly documented these vulnerabilities.

We thank the Representative for their vote on the Central American Women and Children Protection Act of 2019 which was passed with H.R. 2615.
In-District Visits: August 5 - September 6, 2019
Report Back Form

This form is *VERY important* to tracking progress and following up with congressional offices. Please be sure to submit a “report back” for each congressional meeting.

Please email or fax the information to Ann Scholz, SSND
ascholz@lcwr.org or 301-587-4575.

Your Name________________________________________ State and District ___________

Congressional office you met with: __________________________ Meeting Date: ____________

1. Congressional staff in the meeting (names): __________________________

2. Was the Member of Congress present? __________

3. Total Number of Other Meeting Participants: __________

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(*List additional attendees on the back of this sheet. It is very important that we know how many people attended each meeting.)

4. What specific issues did you discuss?

5. What specifically did you ask the senator or representative to do, and what was the response to each ask?

6. In addition to thanking the Member of Congress for the meeting, what type of follow up activities are you planning (i.e. answering questions raised in the meeting, organizing a site visit)? We strongly recommend following up and taking advantage of future Congressional recesses to meet with members or to host members for site visits of your programs.