

## Executive Summary

**H**uman trafficking, also referred to as modern-day slavery, has become a prevalent issue in the United States. Though many individuals think that human trafficking is predominately an international issue, it occurs in the U.S. more frequently than one might think. After drug trafficking, trafficking in persons is the second most lucrative trade, generating massive profits for those involved. It is estimated that there are currently 27 million slaves worldwide. While the most common method of trafficking may involve the exchange of money for sexual acts, human labor is also a form of trafficking. The disastrous consequences of human trafficking plague all areas of society as it is an economic, political, crime, health, migration, and perhaps most importantly, a human rights issue.

International trafficking victims come from a wide range of economically suffering countries: Thailand, Vietnam, Mexico, Russia, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Brazil, to name a few. Taken from their homes, women and children, who are the primary victims, are brought into the United States to work in the sex industry (prostitution, massage parlors, stripping, etc.), domestic servitude (housekeeping and maid services), sweatshop labor, and agricultural work. By capitalizing on increasing unemployment rates in the already impoverished countries of origin, traffickers lure victims in with promises of wealth and success in the United States. Many victims are also sold into bondage by their families. This practice is especially common in heavily patriarchal societies in which female offspring are viewed as liabilities or financial burdens. In the United States, victims of trafficking are often female runaways and impoverished women as they suffer disproportionate rates of poverty and poor education. In her address to the U.S. Senate, human rights activist, Wendy Patten explained—

“Trafficking occurs for a variety of pernicious purposes, ranging from bonded labor to forced prostitution. Women, men, girls, and boys are trafficked and forced to work or provide services in or on farms, factories, restaurants, homes, brothels, and bars. Despite the varied settings into which people are trafficked, the common element in all trafficking cases is the ongoing violation of the person. The goal of traffickers is to exert total control over the victim in order to extract labor or services from him or her. Traffickers around the world use a common set of tactics to trap their victims in exploitative situations: physical force, threats of physical force, deception, fraud, intimidation, isolation, debt bondage, threats of deportation, and threats to family members. It is vital to address trafficking in all of its horrific forms.”

Though this report is by no means an exhaustive account of human trafficking, it is an attempt to simplify a very complex and daunting problem. This report contains information about the various types of trafficking and the measures currently being taken to prevent it. Also included are steps that ordinary citizens can take to become involved in the fight to end human trafficking. Abolishing it will require the support of many individuals, not simply policymakers and law enforcement. As the philosopher Edmund Burke once said, “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men [and women] do nothing.”♦