

August 6, 2008

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

The undersigned strongly desire to see the Administration maintain momentum against slavery and human trafficking. We applaud the historic efforts of your Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and firmly believe this issue may well be one of your administration's greatest legacies. Unfortunately, this legacy is now in peril.

In December, the House of Representatives passed HR-3887, the William Wilberforce Act of 2007, with overwhelming bipartisan support (405-2). Regrettably, the current Senate version S-3061, sponsored by Senator Biden, removes key provisions of the House Wilberforce Act. Among other things, S-3061 removes provisions necessary to aggressively prosecute sex traffickers and provisions to strengthen the U.S. State Department's efforts to combat slavery and trafficking around the globe.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) is out of step with your bold stance against slavery and human trafficking, as evidenced by its opposition to the stronger House bill. DOJ argues that there are issues of federalism that limit the agency from taking a more active role in prosecuting traffickers, and what is more, that this would be a diversion of DOJ resources. Yet if there is one issue our nation has federalized—at great price—surely it is slavery! The 13th Amendment federalized this issue, not HR-3887. Further, the Mann Act of 1910, also enacted by Republicans, made it a federal crime for pimp-traffickers to traffic persons across state lines. And contrary to the impression given by DOJ, it does not have to take up thousands of cases against pimp-traffickers, only the most egregious.

With these hollow objections, DOJ has *opposed* federal prosecution of many American sex tourists who create demand for adult victims abroad, *opposed* the incorporation of explicitly named penalties within the Act for Americans sexually abusing children abroad, and *opposed* taking away from pimps the defense that they did not know a child's age.

Because the House version of the Wilberforce Act strengthens U.S. efforts while the Senate bill hampers crucial enforcement provisions, **we urge you to bring DOJ in line with your stated policy objectives and take a firm stand behind the House's William Wilberforce Act of 2007 (HR-3887).**

We are eager to see you act soon, to ensure the gains already made and strengthen future efforts. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bruce Chapman  
President  
Discovery Institute

[organizations listed for purposes of identification only]

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