

Senator Murkowski (R-AK) and Senator Smith (D-MN)

## **S. \_\_\_ Human Trafficking and Exploitation Prevention Training Act of 2021**

The *Human Trafficking and Exploitation Prevention Training Act of 2021*, would prevent the human trafficking and exploitation of children by providing grants for training students, parents, teachers, school and youth development personnel to understand, recognize, prevent, and respond to signs of human trafficking. While many people believe this crime only impacts children from other countries who are smuggled across our borders, the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 83 percent of sex trafficking victims in the United States are U.S. citizens.

According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), every two minutes a child is being prepared for sexual exploitation. Although there are no official estimates of victims of sex and/or labor trafficking in the United States, advocates in the field and researchers estimate that hundreds of thousands of individuals are trafficked in the United States<sup>1</sup>. Traffickers target their victims on the internet, on the telephone, through friends who have already been victimized, at the mall and even in after-school programs where their families believe they are safe. The Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimated that in 2020, 1 out of 6 endangered runaways were likely child sex trafficking victims.

Across the country, traffickers are systematically targeting vulnerable children from varied socioeconomic backgrounds and geographic areas by frequenting locations where children congregate — including schools, malls, bus and train stations, and group homes, among other locations. [As illustrated in the deeply disturbing Jeffrey Epstein case, in which he paid girls to recruit other girls to sexually exploit and abuse](#), traffickers often use peers or classmates who befriend the target and slowly groom or exploit the child starting at an extremely young age for the trafficker. Children being exploited or trafficked are often in plain view, underscoring the urgent need for the expansion of effective training programs to increase awareness in schools across the country.

### **This legislation would:**

- Authorize the Director of the Office of Trafficking in Persons in the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) to establish a demonstration project to issue grants to non-profit organizations and schools to develop and implement age-appropriate, culturally competent, and gender-responsive curriculum for training students, parents, teachers, and school and youth development personnel to understand, recognize, prevent, and respond to signs of human trafficking.
- Instruct the Director to give priority to eligible entities serving geographic areas with the highest prevalence of human trafficking, and areas with the highest prevalence of at-risk, vulnerable, or underserved populations including homeless youth, foster youth, youth involved in the child welfare system and runaways.
- The legislation sets forth important data collection on the human trafficking / exploitation of children and strict, privacy-protected reporting requirements for the program.

**For more information, please contact Anna Dietderich ([Anna\\_Dietderich@murkowski.senate.gov](mailto:Anna_Dietderich@murkowski.senate.gov)) or Samantha Marcy ([Samantha\\_Marcy@smith.senate.gov](mailto:Samantha_Marcy@smith.senate.gov))**

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<sup>1</sup> Polaris. “The Facts.” Available at <https://polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/facts>.