United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 10, 2015

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Senator Leahy:

We write to respectfully request that you hold a hearing on the significant problem of sex trafficking in the United States.

We have heard heartbreaking stories of victims who were abused by their trafficker by day and sold to customers multiple times each night for a profit. As described in a recent op-ed in the *Washington Post*, "Sandra" ran away from an abusive foster home at the age of 12.[1] A man found her at a bus stop and "promised to love and care for her forever." Instead, he sold her to at least seven men each night. Then there is "Tami," who was kidnapped at the age of 15 on her way home from school. She was held captive for six months, raped, beaten, and starved. At night, she was sold for sex with other men.

Unfortunately, there are many stories like Sandra's and Tami's. Human trafficking is a $32 billion criminal enterprise, making it the second largest criminal industry in the world behind the drug trade. According to the Department of Justice, 83 percent of sex trafficking victims in the United States are American citizens.

Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies are taking steps to combat sex trafficking. For example, between January and June of last year, the Federal Bureau of Investigation recovered 168 trafficking victims and arrested 281 sex traffickers in "Operation Cross Country."

[1] Malika Saada Saar, Op-Ed, *There is no such thing as a child prostitute*, WASH. POST, Feb. 17, 2014.

However, there is widespread recognition that the federal government needs to do more to combat sex trafficking. A number of us have introduced or cosponsored legislation to address different aspects of this terrible problem. A hearing would provide an opportunity to shine a spotlight on sex trafficking; receive testimony from victims, advocates, and law enforcement; and provide the Committee with an informed perspective as it considers legislation in this area.

Sex trafficking leaves victims permanently scarred by their exploitation. We in Congress should do everything in our power to end this horrific practice. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Susan Collins
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Barbara Mikulski
United States Senator

Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Deb Fischer
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Joni Ernst
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Claire McCaskill
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator