



Breaking the Link between Human Trafficking and Forced Migration Protecting Unaccompanied Children

Pass the Immigration Court Efficiency and Children's Court Act of 2023 (H.R. 6145 and S. 3178)

The Immigration Court Efficiency and Children's Court Act of 2023 is a bi-partisan, common-sense proposal that would make meaningful progress in improving immigration court proceedings for unaccompanied children and combat human trafficking. Experience has proven that men, women, children, and families who are forced by circumstance to migrate to the United States are easy prey for human traffickers.

As leaders in the struggle to end human trafficking, the Alliance to End Human Trafficking and the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd have joined forces to work with policy makers to break the link between human trafficking and forced migration. The 118th Congress has the opportunity to address root causes of human trafficking by better protecting unaccompanied migrant children, thus reducing their vulnerability to exploitation.

We call on Members of Congress to support The Immigration Court Efficiency and Children's Court Act of 2023, which would dramatically improve the legal process for unaccompanied children who arrive in the United States and help to protect them from exploitation by human traffickers.

This legislation would strengthen the court's ability to provide a much-needed checkpoint where unaccompanied children can be identified as victims of human trafficking and ensure their ongoing protection from harm.

Human trafficking takes many forms, can occur anywhere, and is often difficult to detect. Unaccompanied children are particularly vulnerable. We need to do more to identify vulnerable children.

The children's court system can play a critical role in combating human trafficking and protecting children from abuse.

Currently, unaccompanied children face a complex court system too often without legal counsel. This should not be the case in the United States.

The goal of The Immigration Court Efficiency and Children's Court Act of 2023 is to make the immigration court process for unaccompanied children a supportive and child-friendly environment where their cases are heard in a special court with judges and lawyers who are specially trained in human trafficking and trauma informed care.

The Children's Court would require that the courtroom environment be a welcoming environment for children where they are encouraged to participate as fully as possible in the proceedings.

The Act would require the Children's Court to coordinate with legal service providers and pro bono attorneys who serve unaccompanied children with the goal of expanding legal representation and avoiding waste of judicial time and resources.

We believe this special legal process as set out in the legislation will help identify children who are particularly vulnerable, have been victims of trafficking, or are at risk of exploitation and provide a legal setting that is appropriate for children.

The Immigration Court Efficiency and Children's Court Act (H.R. 6145 and S. 3178) is a bi-partisan, commonsense proposal that would make meaningful progress in improving immigration proceedings for unaccompanied children and be a formal process to combat human trafficking.