



FIRST FOCUS

CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

March 13, 2015

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Assistant Majority Leader Cornyn and Assistant Minority Leader Durbin:

I am writing on behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children, a bipartisan children's advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families the priority in federal budget and policy decisions, to urge you break the impasse that has stalled the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (S. 178).

S. 178 would protect children who are victims of sex trafficking, or at risk of sex trafficking. It is a strong bipartisan bill that provides more support for victims, an increase in enforcement resources and prevention and stiffer penalties. Several positive amendments have also been offered to the underlying bill that would protect homeless children and youth from being trafficked.

S.A. 271 would amend the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s definition of homelessness to include homeless children and youth who are living temporarily in motels or with others because they have nowhere else to go. Allowing these children and youth to access HUD homeless assistance services would assist them in becoming stably housed and remaining safe. In addition, S.A. 290 would reauthorize Runaway and Homeless Youth grant programs that provide critical services to homeless and runaway youth and protect them from becoming victims of trafficking.

We appreciate your leadership in making vulnerable children and youth a legislative priority, and urge you to find a path that allows the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act to move forward. We welcome the opportunity to continue working with you on this and other proposals to improve the well-being of America's children and youth.

Sincerely,