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May 4, 2021

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
Comptroller General
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

Child trafficking is a horrific global humanitarian concern. Congress recently acted in a bipartisan manner to combat this form of modern-day slavery, passing several laws that created programs aimed at fighting trafficking of both children and adults.¹ Unfortunately, these efforts have not meaningfully reduced rates of human trafficking. For this reason, we are requesting the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issue a report on the federal government's implementation of these programs and recommendations for improvement.

From 2018 to 2019, there was a 19 percent increase in human trafficking incidents, according to the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline.² Something needs to change. The programs intended to fight this criminal activity are housed in several agencies and have differing purposes, making it challenging for policymakers to see the complete picture of the prevention activities that are taking place and the efficacy of those activities.

Before creating new duplicative programs that double down on previously failed practices, we want a holistic view of what is working, what is not, and where there may be gaps or overlap between programs. GAO has completed various reports on this topic, but we are interested to

¹ P.L. 115-392, *Abolish Human Trafficking Act of 2017*; P.L. 115-393, *Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017*; P.L. 115-425, *Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2018*; and P.L. 115-427, *Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2017*

² <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/sites/default/files/Polaris-2019-US-National-Human-Trafficking-Hotline-Data-Report.pdf>

know more about the federal efforts on child trafficking so we can improve the system and ultimately, save lives.

To help us understand the landscape of this topic, we request GAO complete a report that answers the following questions:

1. What federal programs exist to address child trafficking, what is known about the funding status for each of these programs, and what is known about their effectiveness at preventing trafficking or supporting victims?
2. Of the existing programs, which programs are focused on prevention and which programs are focused on supporting victims?
3. Of the existing programs, which programs are focused nationally, and which are focused internationally?
4. What federal programs exist to address human trafficking more broadly?
5. What do we know about partnerships between educational institutions, local governments, federal government, and private businesses to help fight trafficking and to support victims?
6. What do we know about the differences in programs to fight domestic trafficking and efforts to fight international trafficking?
7. How does trafficking impact vulnerable populations including runaway and homeless youth?
8. What is known about gaps in prevention or support efforts?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have additional questions or comments, please contact Mandy Schaumburg (mandy.schaumburg@mail.house.gov) of the Committee staff at (202) 225-4527.

Sincerely,



Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member



Burgess Owens
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary and Secondary Education