

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2522

To establish a congressional Commission on the Abolition of Modern-Day Slavery.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 24, 2007

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mrs. DRAKE, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PITTS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. HONDA, Ms. CLARKE, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. CONYERS, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Ways and Means, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish a congressional Commission on the Abolition of Modern-Day Slavery.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Congressional Commis-
5 sion on the Abolition of Modern-Day Slavery Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. MODERN-DAY SLAVERY.**

2 In this Act, the term “modern-day slavery” means
3 the status or condition of a person who is under the con-
4 trol of another person, where that control is enforced by
5 violence, or psychological coercion, and who is exploited
6 through involuntary servitude, forced labor, debt bondage
7 or bonded labor, serfdom, peonage, trafficking in persons
8 for forced labor or for sexual exploitation (including child
9 sex tourism), forced marriage, or other similar means.

10 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

11 Congress makes the following findings:

12 (1) Modern-day slavery takes many forms, in-
13 cluding chattel slavery or slavery by descent, and the
14 exploitation occurs in a myriad of situations, includ-
15 ing in the agricultural, commercial sex, construction,
16 manufacturing, and service industries, as well as in
17 domestic servitude.

18 (2) The perpetrators of modern-day slavery vio-
19 late the dignity of men, women, and children, using
20 violence that at times results in death, sexual abuse,
21 rape, torture, dangerous and degrading working con-
22 ditions, poor nutrition, drug and alcohol addiction,
23 and psychological trauma.

24 (3) According to the Universal Declaration of
25 Human Rights “No one shall be held in slavery or

1 servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be pro-
2 hibited in all their forms.”.

3 (4) The United States and the international
4 community have acknowledged that modern-day
5 slavery must be abolished in accordance with the
6 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
7 the Slavery, Servitude, Forced Labour and Similar
8 Institutions and Practices Convention of 1926; the
9 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slav-
10 ery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices
11 Similar to Slavery; the Optional Protocol to the Con-
12 vention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of
13 Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography;
14 the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the
15 Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children
16 in Armed Conflicts; the Convention concerning the
17 Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimini-
18 nation of the Worst Forms of Child Labour; the
19 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention; and the
20 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Traf-
21 ficking in Persons, especially Women and Children,
22 Supplementing the United Nations Convention
23 Against Transnational Organized Crime.

24 (5) The Declaration of Independence recognizes
25 the inherent dignity and worth of all people and

1 states that all people are created equal and are en-
2 dowed by their Creator with certain unalienable
3 rights.

4 (6) The 13th amendment to the Constitution of
5 the United States recognizes that “Neither slavery
6 nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment
7 for crime whereof the party shall have been duly
8 convicted, shall exist within the United States, or
9 any place subject to their jurisdiction.”.

10 (7) The United States has given particular pri-
11 ority to combating trafficking in persons, a form of
12 modern-day slavery, through the enactment of the
13 Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (division
14 A of Public Law 106–386) and the Trafficking Vic-
15 tims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 (Public
16 Law 108–193) and the Trafficking Victims Protec-
17 tion Reauthorization Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–
18 164).

19 (8) The importation into the United States of
20 goods mined, produced, or manufactured by forced
21 or indentured labor, including forced or indentured
22 child labor, is prohibited under the Tariff Act of
23 1930.

1 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**

2 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established a con-
3 gressional Commission on the Abolition of Modern-Day
4 Slavery (in this Act referred to as the “Commission”).

5 (b) **MEMBERSHIP.**—

6 (1) **COMPOSITION.**—The Commission shall be
7 composed of 12 members, of whom—

8 (A) 3 shall be appointed by the Speaker of
9 the House of Representatives;

10 (B) 3 shall be appointed by the majority
11 leader of the Senate;

12 (C) 3 shall be appointed by the minority
13 leader of the House of Representatives; and

14 (D) 3 shall be appointed by the minority
15 leader of the Senate.

16 (2) **QUALIFICATIONS.**—Members of the Com-
17 mission shall be individuals with demonstrated ex-
18 pertise or experience in combating modern-day slav-
19 ery.

20 (3) **DATE.**—The appointments of the members
21 of the Commission shall be made not later than 30
22 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

23 (c) **PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.**—Mem-
24 bers shall be appointed for the life of the Commission. Any
25 vacancy in the Commission shall not affect its powers, but

1 shall be filled in the same manner as the original appoint-
2 ment.

3 (d) CO-CHAIRPERSONS.—The Speaker of the House
4 of Representatives shall designate 1 of the members ap-
5 pointed under subsection (b)(1)(A) as a co-chairperson of
6 the Commission. The majority leader of the Senate shall
7 designate 1 of the members appointed under subsection
8 (b)(1)(B) as a co-chairperson of the Commission.

9 (e) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 60 days after
10 the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall
11 hold its first meeting.

12 (f) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at the
13 call of either Co-chairperson.

14 (g) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the
15 Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser num-
16 ber of members may meet or hold hearings.

17 **SEC. 5. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.**

18 (a) STUDY.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall—

20 (A) conduct a thorough study of modern-
21 day slavery in all its forms and why it still ex-
22 ists, including the failure by authorities to en-
23 force laws prohibiting slavery and prosecuting
24 the perpetrators of slavery, corruption among
25 officials, and the vulnerability of certain popu-

1 lations, such as those who are discriminated
2 against because of gender, ethnicity or caste,
3 and those in areas of conflict and post conflict,
4 transitioning states, or states undergoing sud-
5 den political upheaval, economic collapse, civil
6 unrest, internal armed conflict, chronic unem-
7 ployment, widespread poverty, or manmade or
8 natural disasters;

9 (B) review programs of relevant govern-
10 mental agencies with respect to modern-day-
11 slavery, including the Office of the United
12 States Trade Representative, the Department
13 of Commerce, the Department of Defense, the
14 Department of Health and Human Services, the
15 Department of Homeland Security, the Depart-
16 ment of Labor, the Department of the Treas-
17 ury, the United States Agency for International
18 Development, the Department of State, the
19 President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor
20 and Combat Trafficking in Persons, and the
21 Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center;

22 (C) examine efforts undertaken by foreign
23 countries and multilateral organizations to pre-
24 vent or combat modern-day slavery in all its
25 forms, prosecute the perpetrators or protect its

1 victims, and identify those countries with the
2 most significant number of victims of modern-
3 day slavery; and

4 (D) convene additional experts from rel-
5 evant nongovernmental organizations as part of
6 the Commission's review.

7 (2) GOALS.—Based on its findings under para-
8 graph (1), the Commission shall—

9 (A) advise the Congress on how the United
10 States could lend support to the efforts to
11 eradicate modern-day slavery in all its forms;

12 (B) provide a comprehensive evaluation of
13 comparative models and strategies to prevent
14 modern-day slavery, rescue and rehabilitate vic-
15 tims of modern-day slavery, prosecute offend-
16 ers, increase accountability within countries
17 that tolerate modern-day slavery, develop inter-
18 national cooperation to combat modern slavery,
19 and increase education about modern-day slav-
20 ery in all its forms, particularly among vulner-
21 able populations;

22 (C) provide a comprehensive evaluation of
23 current United States trade policy's effect on
24 modern slavery, including a list of the top ten
25 countries with the highest number of slaves

1 within their borders, along with the precise na-
2 ture of the United States trade relationship
3 with each country;

4 (D) provide a comprehensive evaluation of
5 the effectiveness of United States laws prohib-
6 iting the importation of goods manufactured or
7 produced in whole or in part through forced
8 labor or child labor, including a list of the five
9 categories of slave-made goods that most regu-
10 larly are imported into the United States, and
11 any related law enforcement action taken to
12 prevent their importation;

13 (E) provide a comprehensive evaluation of
14 United States Government procurement policies
15 and practices regarding the procurement of
16 slave-made goods or services through grantees,
17 contractors, or subcontractors; and

18 (F) examine the economic impact on com-
19 munities and countries that demonstrate meas-
20 ured success in fighting modern-day slavery in
21 all its forms.

22 (b) RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Commission shall rec-
23 ommend legislative and administrative actions necessary
24 for the most effective ways to combat and eliminate mod-
25 ern-day slavery in all its forms, including incorporating

1 best practices into all United States Government anti-slav-
2 ery programs for prevention, rescue and rehabilitation,
3 prosecution, increasing accountability within governments
4 that tolerate slavery, developing international cooperation
5 to combat modern-day slavery, and increasing education
6 about modern-day slavery, particularly among vulnerable
7 populations. The Commission shall also determine the na-
8 ture of what constitutes appropriate relations with coun-
9 tries that tolerate modern-day slavery in any form and
10 make specific recommendations to eliminate the importa-
11 tion of slave-made goods and the United States Govern-
12 ment's procurement of slave-made goods and services.

13 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 11 months after the
14 date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall sub-
15 mit to the Speaker and minority leader of the House of
16 Representatives and the majority leader and minority
17 leader of the Senate, a report containing the results of
18 the study and other activities conducted under subsection
19 (a) and the recommendations developed under subsection
20 (b).

21 **SEC. 6. POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.**

22 (a) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold such
23 hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such
24 testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission
25 considers necessary to carry out this Act.

1 (b) INFORMATION FROM GOVERNMENTAL AGEN-
2 CIES.—The Commission may secure directly from any de-
3 partment or agency such information as the Commission
4 considers necessary to carry out this Act. Upon request
5 of either co-chairperson of the Commission, the head of
6 such department or agency shall furnish such information
7 to the Commission.

8 **SEC. 7. COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

9 (a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Each member of
10 the Commission who is not an officer or employee of the
11 Federal Government shall be compensated at a rate equal
12 to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay pre-
13 scribed for level IV of the Executive Schedule under sec-
14 tion 5313 of title 5, United States Code, for each day (in-
15 cluding travel time) during which such member is engaged
16 in the performance of the duties of the Commission. All
17 members of the Commission who are officers or employees
18 of the United States shall serve without compensation in
19 addition to that received for their services as officers or
20 employees of the United States.

21 (b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Com-
22 mission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per
23 diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employ-
24 ees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title
25 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or

1 regular places of business in the performance of services
2 for the Commission.

3 (c) STAFF.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The co-chairpersons of the
5 Commission, acting jointly, may, without regard to
6 the civil service laws and regulations, appoint and
7 terminate an executive director and such other addi-
8 tional personnel as may be necessary to enable the
9 Commission to perform its duties. The employment
10 of an executive director shall be subject to confirma-
11 tion by the Commission.

12 (2) COMPENSATION.—The co-chairpersons of
13 the Commission, acting jointly, may fix the com-
14 pensation of the executive director and other per-
15 sonnel without regard to chapter 51 and subchapter
16 III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, re-
17 lating to classification of positions and General
18 Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of pay for
19 the executive director and other personnel may not
20 exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive
21 Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

22 (d) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Federal
23 Government employees may be detailed to the Commission
24 without reimbursement, and such detail shall be without
25 interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege.

1 (e) **PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMIT-**
2 **TENT SERVICES.**—The co-chairpersons of the Commis-
3 sion, acting jointly, may procure temporary and intermit-
4 tent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United
5 States Code, at rates for individuals which do not exceed
6 the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay pre-
7 scribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section
8 5316 of such title.

9 **SEC. 8. TERMINATION OF THE COMMISSION.**

10 The Commission shall terminate 90 days after the
11 date on which the Commission submits its report under
12 section 5(c).

13 **SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

14 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—There are authorized to be appro-
15 priated to the Commission for fiscal year 2008 such sums
16 as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

17 (b) **AVAILABILITY.**—Any sums appropriated under
18 the authorization contained in this section shall remain
19 available, without fiscal year limitation, until expended.

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