



News from  
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## Rep. Pitts' statement on sex trafficking report

Washington—Congressman Joe Pitts (R, PA-16) made the following statement regarding the 2002 Trafficking in Persons Report, released yesterday by the U.S. Department of State.

“I wanted to stand here today with my colleagues because I believe this is one of the most important humanitarian issues of our time.

“A century and a half ago, we fought a war in this country to ban slavery. We succeeded in that struggle, but sex slavery continues even in our own country.

“Women and children from poor countries are lured away from home with fantastic promises of wealth and opportunity, only to find themselves trapped in lives that are unspeakably demeaning.

“Think of a young girl, trapped in city she doesn't know that speaks a language she can't understand. She's told to have sex with strangers or face severe beatings and other punishments. Sometimes she's there because she was lied to—other times she's there because her desperate parents sold her.

“There are millions of girls just like that in countries all over the world. It is the duty of the civilized world to shine an intense spotlight on the world sex trade and to apply pressure to those countries that turn a blind eye to it.

“Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act for that purpose. Today, the State Department has released its report on sex trafficking. Prior to today, many of us were concerned that diplomacy would take precedence over the victims.

“We were concerned that the diplomat's natural desire to foster close relations with the nations of the world would tempt them to go soft. In some cases, I'm sorry to say, I think we were right. India, Thailand, and Vietnam all got second-tier ratings.

“These countries are among the very worst offenders in the world, and have shown no genuine desire to stem sex trafficking at all. Clearly, they deserved third-tier ratings.

And I also want to mention some disturbing facts about Europe that haven't received the attention in this report that I think was due. The Netherlands and Germany have both legalized prostitution. This is the worst action a government can take when it comes to the sex trade. By legalizing prostitution, these governments have institutionalized the exploitation of women. This is unconscionable, and should be condemned by our government and by all civilized people.”

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