

TRAFFICKING of WOMEN: U.S. Policy and International Law

The League of Women Voters in cooperation with the Center for Women Policy Studies and Women's Environment and Development Organization developed a collaborative project in 2004 which resulted in a series of papers covering major issues concerning women internationally: Trafficking of Women was one of those issues.

Seventy percent of the 600,000 – 800,000 people trafficked across international border every year are women. And while the complex issue of trafficking occurs in different forms and affects both women and men around the world, it is women and girls who suffer most acutely. Women are particularly vulnerable to trafficking; largely due to gender inequalities that affect their economic and social status.

In addition, trafficking in all its forms uses coercive tactics, including deception, fraud, intimidation, isolation, threat and use of physical force, or debt bondage, as a way to control women. There are also increasing problems of corrupt government officials facilitating the trafficking, and treating the victims as criminals.

The US has taken specific steps to address trafficking and its effect on women through federal and state legislation and international policy. Yet, the focus of U.S. anti-trafficking efforts has been primarily on the **prosecution of traffickers, rather than protecting and advancing the victim's human rights.**

The US Senate must ratify the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol. The protocol establishes a global standard for government action and offers an opportunity for countries of origin, transit, and destination to work together in combating trafficking.

Further up to date information can be found on the website of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW Coalition) at <http://www.catwinternational.org/> .

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