

RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH AND TRAFFICKING PREVENTION ACT, S. 262

The Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act reauthorizes and strengthens essential programs for many of our nation's most vulnerable children. **Runaway and homeless youth (RHY) are especially vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.** The National Center for Missing and Endangered Children (NCMEC) estimates that between 2009-2013, 12%, or roughly 7,000, of missing child cases reported were likely child sex trafficking victims. **Prevention is a key component of combatting human trafficking, and our bill provides services that prevent young people from becoming victims in the first place.**

The **population of homeless teens has more than doubled since 2007** in the United States, and approximately **39% of the homeless population is under the age of 18**. Teens run away and become homeless for myriad reasons, often due to family problems or residential instability. A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that 46% of homeless youth had run away from home because of **physical abuse** and 17% because of **sexual abuse**. A growing number of homeless youth identify as LGBT, and it is estimated that they comprise up to 40% of the RHY population. This reauthorization prohibits grantees from discriminating against any youth based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Runaway and homeless youth are more likely to become victims of trafficking and exploitation: One shelter survey found that 50% of the homeless youth had been solicited for sex by an adult. In addition to the dangers of human trafficking, this population is at greater risk of suicide, substance abuse, and entering our juvenile justice system.

Our bill reauthorizes vital programs designed to stop the cycle of victimization and provide comprehensive solutions for these young people in need:

- **Basic Center Program** - provides short-term emergency shelter for youth who do not have a place to sleep. This bill also **improves support for family reunification and intervention services**, which can be critical to successful youth outcomes.
- **Street Outreach Program** - provides crisis intervention and services referrals to runaway and homeless youth at street locations and drop-in centers.
- **National Support Activities** offer guidance and assistance to grantees including a national runaway youth crisis line, training and technical assistance, a management information system, and access to evaluation tools to help grantees track the success of their efforts.
- **Transitional Living Program** - provides longer-term residential services and life skills, education, and employment support to older youth to ensure they become productive, successful adults.