

**Office of Joy Smith, M.P.
Kildonan-St. Paul**



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News Release

MP Joy Smith Introduces Motion to Establish February 22 as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day

Ottawa, ON: MP Joy Smith, Member of Parliament for Kildonan-St. Paul and national anti-human trafficking advocate, has introduced Motion M-317 which calls on the Government of Canada to establish February 22 as Canada's National Human Trafficking Awareness Day.

M-317— February 14, 2012 — Mrs. Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul)

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should encourage Canadians to raise awareness of the magnitude of modern day slavery in Canada and abroad and to take steps to combat human trafficking, and should do so by designating the 22nd day of February each year as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, to coincide with the anniversary of the unanimous declaration of the House to condemn all forms of human trafficking and slavery on February 22, 2007.

MP Joy Smith selected February 22 to reflect the anniversary of the day that the House of Commons unanimously condemned human trafficking by adopting her Private Members Motion M-153.

“On February 22, 2007, Canada’s Parliament made a powerful statement by condemning human trafficking and calling for Canada to take steps to combat human trafficking in Canada and abroad,” stated MP Joy Smith. “Today, sex trafficking and forced labour continues to occur across our nation involving both victims trafficked from abroad and domestic victims, including many from First Nations communities. Over the past few years, modern day slavery has been especially exposed in Canada through cases of young Canadian boys and girls, forced into prostitution.”

In 2010, MP Joy Smith released her proposal for a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking entitled ‘*Connecting the Dots*’. This proposal was motivated by her conviction that the complete elimination of modern day forms of slavery requires more than just government initiatives.

“Our government has taken a number of important steps to tackle human trafficking including the development of a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking,” said MP Joy Smith. “Yet, government action alone will not end modern day slavery. Each Canadian must take steps to prevent human trafficking and end this brutal injustice. A National Human Trafficking Awareness Day will help rally Canadian together to effectively eliminate today’s many forms of slavery and raise awareness across Canada.”

“By connecting Canadians with law enforcement, nongovernmental organizations and policy makers, we are connecting the dots,” said MP Joy Smith. “I will never forget the motivating words of a man who heard my message and jumped to his feet to declare that he was proud to be a dot.”

Free-them, a Canadian anti-slavery advocacy organization, was inspired by this man’s enthusiasm and launched the “Proud to be a Dot” Campaign to support MP Smith’s efforts and encourage Canadians to join the fight against human trafficking.

“Until slavery has been eradicated, there is much to be done,” says MP Joy Smith. “We need to get the message out that regardless of who you are, where you live or what you do, you can be a part of the solution to stopping human trafficking.”

MP Joy Smith is one of Canada’s leading anti-human trafficking advocates and has succeeded in bringing forward legislation to combat human trafficking. In 2010, MP Smith’s Bill C-268 became law creating Canada’s first child trafficking offence with stiff minimum sentences. Last October, MP Smith introduced Bill C-310 to amend the *Criminal Code* by adding human trafficking as an extraterritorial offence as well as enhancing the definition of human trafficking.

- 30 -

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:

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Backgrounder – How You Can Recognize National Human Trafficking Awareness Day

- Write a letter to your local MP and to the Prime Minister of Canada asking for February 22 to be declared National Human Trafficking Awareness Day.
 - Send an email to pm@pmo.gc.ca or visit <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/contact.asp?featureId=10>
 - Find out who your local MP is here: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Default.aspx?Language=E>

- Learn about the forms of human trafficking that occur across Canada.
 - Visit <http://www.endmodernslavery.ca> or <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ht-tp/index-eng.htm>
 - Read *Invisible Chains* by UBC Professor Benjamin Perrin
 - Watch Hope for the Sold's *Enslaved and Exploited: The story of sex trafficking in Canada* - <https://vimeo.com/10668783>

- Support MP Joy Smith's Bill C-310 which will enhance Canada's human trafficking legislation.
 - Visit her website for specific steps you can take: http://www.joysmith.ca/main.asp?fxoid=FXMenu,9&cat_ID=27&sub_ID=112&sub2_ID=51

- Raise awareness in your community or workplace by holding an awareness event
 - Request a free human trafficking resource kit from MP Joy Smith by sending your request by email to joy.smith.a2@parl.gc.ca

- Get involved with an anti-human trafficking organization in your area.
 - Visit MP Joy Smith's website for a list of Canadian anti-human trafficking organizations: http://www.joysmith.ca/main.asp?fxoid=FXMenu,11&cat_ID=27&sub_ID=92

- Stay informed
 - Sign up for MP Joy Smith's monthly human trafficking e-newsletter by emailing joy.smith.a2@parl.gc.ca.

- Write a letter to your local newspaper about forms of slavery that are taking place in your community or province.