



RE: ACLU Recommends Voting YES on Rep. Blumenthal's Amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013.

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Dear Senator,

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union, please see the below alert strongly urging you to vote YES on an amendment that Rep. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) is expected to offer to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 during the Senate Armed Services Committee markup this week. The amendment aims to end human trafficking in U.S. government contracting.

Please call Legislative Counsel Devon Chaffee with any questions at (202) 675-2331.

Regards,

Laura W. Murphy
Director, Washington Legislative Office

Devon Chaffee
Legislative Counsel

ACLU Urges YES Vote on Senator Blumenthal's Amendment the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013

Rep. Richard Blumenthal's (D-CT) is expected to introduce an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 to end human trafficking and forced labor in U.S. government contracting during the Armed Services Committee markup this week.

The American Civil Liberties Union urges you to vote YES on the Blumenthal amendment.

Vote YES on the Blumenthal amendment because federal funds should never support human trafficking. Reports estimate that thousands of people have been trafficked from countries overseas to work on U.S. government contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past 10 years. Recruited from impoverished villages, these men and women are charged exorbitant recruitment fees, lied to about what country they will be taken to and how much they will be paid, and often have no choice but to live and work in unacceptable and unsafe conditions. The Blumenthal amendment will help ensure that U.S. federal funds are not facilitating such exploitative, abusive and illegal practices.

Vote YES on the Blumenthal amendment because it will help make "zero tolerance" a reality. It is not enough that the administration has proclaimed a "zero tolerance" policy against human trafficking. That stated policy must be put into action. The Blumenthal bill will help make that happen by requiring contractors operating abroad to ensure that their subcontractors and the recruitment agencies they use comply with U.S. anti-trafficking laws, policies and practices. The amendment also increases accountability by extending criminal prohibitions against fraudulent labor practices, including trafficking and forced labor, to contractors and subcontractors on overseas contracts.

Vote YES on the Blumenthal amendment because U.S. contractors should not continue to profit from fraud and abuse. Contractor malfeasance wastes tens of millions of U.S. tax dollars annually and human trafficking and forced labor on government contracts is part of that problem. The illicit recruitment fees that trafficked individuals pay, together with the salary cost-cutting techniques that contractors employ, go to enrich prime contractors, subcontractors and local recruiters, and others who profit from the exploitation of individuals wanting to work for government contractors or subcontractors. By increasing oversight and accountability, the Blumenthal amendment will help put an end to this unacceptable chain of profits based on trafficking and forced labor.

Vote YES on the Blumenthal amendment because it has strong bipartisan support. The Blumenthal Amendment is based on S. 2234 introduced by Senator Blumenthal with 8 cosponsors including 3 Republicans—including Senators Susan Collins, Rob Portman, and Marco Rubio—as well as 5 Democrats—including Senators Joseph Lieberman, Robert Menendez, Claire McCaskill, Al Franken and Jon Tester. The Republican controlled House also passed an identical amendment to its version of the NDAA on May 18th by voice vote.

For more information, please contact Devon Chaffee, ACLU Legislative Counsel, at 202/675-2331 or dchaffee@aclu.org.