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**Congressional testimony outlines horrific crime of trafficking
As many as 17,500 people trafficked into U.S. yearly
Points to provisions that could protect children at the border**

**USCCB OFFICIAL APPLAUDS PASSAGE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION,
URGES CONGRESS TO ENSURE SPEEDY IMPLEMENTATION**

WASHINGTON—In testimony March 19 before the Subcommittee on Border, Maritime, and Global Terrorism of the House Homeland Security Committee, Anastasia K. Brown, refugee program director of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), applauded enactment of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, signed into law by President Bush December 23, 2008. She urged Congress and the executive branch to immediately implement its provisions, particularly as they apply to child trafficking victims.

“Human trafficking is a horrific crime that destroys lives,” Ms. Brown testified. “Women and children have been forced into prostitution and child trafficking rings, while men, women, and children have been forced into different types of manual labor, without pay or protection,” she added.

As many as 700,000 persons are trafficked annually worldwide, and as many as 17,500 human beings are trafficked into the United States each year. Despite these large numbers, only about 2,000 victims in the United States have been identified and provided services since the year 2000, when the first trafficking law was passed.

In her testimony, Ms. Brown pointed to several provisions which should help child trafficking victims be identified and provided care in a timely manner. A new requirement mandating the Department of Homeland Security to screen children from contiguous countries as potential trafficking victims should be implemented expeditiously, she said, as well as a requirement that child victims receive immediate services once identified. Ms. Brown added that federal agencies should better coordinate their efforts in combating trafficking.

“The federal government has made great strides in addressing human trafficking since 2000, but much more needs to be done. Working together, the U.S. Catholic bishops strongly believe that we can drastically reduce, if not eliminate, this horrific crime against humanity,” she concluded.

Her testimony can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/mrs/testimony.shtml>.

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