

# **H.R. 7710, *Counter Human Trafficking Research and Development Act***

## One-page Summary

The *Counter Human Trafficking Research and Development Act* directs the President, through the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, to establish a **National Counter Human Trafficking Research and Development Initiative**. The purpose of this Initiative is to improve efforts to prevent, identify, and disrupt human trafficking by supporting coordinated research where key knowledge gaps exist and development of standards for data sharing.

The impetus of this Act is the need to address major barriers to anti-trafficking research efforts, including limited data sources and data fragmentation, which limits the ability to carry out rigorous, peer-reviewed advanced study of this issue. Human trafficking is a complex issue that operates in the shadows through complicated physical and social networks. Little is understood about the nature of human trafficking. Science and technology have important roles to play in combatting trafficking by advancing our understanding of it and providing the basis for evidence-based policymaking and interventions.

This Act supports interagency coordination of Federal research and development activities, improved information sharing capability, and facilitation of public-private partnerships. The Initiative under this Act will support interdisciplinary research to accelerate scientific understanding of all forms of human trafficking, including forced labor. Key areas that need research include vulnerability reduction, measuring the prevalence of trafficking, evaluating the efficacy and impact of anti-trafficking interventions, and identifying effective mechanisms for disrupting human trafficking networks. This Act also supports the development of anti-trafficking technologies that leverage existing research programs on privacy enhancing technologies and data and metadata analytic tools.

Further, to address the data challenges of human trafficking research, this Act directs the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study that assesses the data collection needs and practices of organizations that collect human trafficking information. Finally, this bill encourages the continued work of the National Science Foundation in awarding grants to support anti-trafficking research.

The *Counter Human Trafficking Research and Development Act* complements and encourages coordination with the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.