

Shared Hope International leads urgent last minute appeal for justice in the case of Texas sex trafficking survivor

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WASHINGTON, DC, USA, February 5, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Only hours remain for the state of Texas to treat Zephi Trevino as a survivor of child sex trafficking rather than as a criminal. Tomorrow, February 5, a decision will be made whether to transfer her to adult court to be tried as an accomplice in the murder of the man who paid to rape her.

Shared Hope International is at the forefront of anti-trafficking efforts in cases such as Zephi's, advocating for legal and judicial acknowledgement that children who have been brutalized by sexual exploitation and trafficking are victims, not criminals, regardless of the circumstances. Zephi's trafficker was arrested for the murder of this "client" and despite never pulling the trigger, 16 year old Zephi is being charged with capital murder.

Absent a proper understanding of the traumatic circumstances that put a minor in such an explosive situation, the possibility exists that Zephi could be transferred to adult court and potentially face life in prison.

"Treating an exploited child as a criminal not only ignores well documented research regarding the traumatic impact of sex trafficking victimization on a child, but is in clear conflict with both federal and Texas law that demand treatment of that child as a victim", according to Shared Hope Founder and President, Linda Smith.

Smith continued, "Shared Hope and the many who have signed our petition, encourage District Attorney Creuzot to demonstrate that the legal system will bring justice to Zephi by dropping these unjust charges against her."

ABOUT SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL

Founded in 1998 by then U.S. Congresswoman Linda Smith, Shared Hope International strives to prevent the conditions that foster sex trafficking, promote restoration for survivors of sex trafficking, and bring justice to vulnerable women and children. A non-profit Christian organization, Shared Hope engages in diverse activities that confront sex trafficking in communities throughout America. Our efforts include training churches to understand the signs

of trafficking and how to protect children, and how to provide prevention education to their community. Shared Hope educates first responders, health care providers, social workers and communities to identify warning signs of trafficking and employ intervention techniques to appropriately respond to child trafficking victims; providing restorative services to affected children and women; and offering legislative support to those focused on strengthening laws that fight child sex trafficking. Our vision is to coordinate a national U.S. network of protection to improve the response to victims of trafficking. We believe we can create a world where every survivor is surrounded by trained professionals, an alert community, just law and policy, knowledgeable service providers and appropriate shelter options.

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