

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

1540 Kuser Road, Suite A9
Hamilton, NJ 08619-3828
(609) 585-7878
TTY (609) 585-3650

108 Lacey Road, Suite 38A
Whiting, NJ 08759-1331
(732) 350-2300

2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3004
(202) 225-3765

<http://chrissmith.house.gov>



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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

Good morning/afternoon. It is an honor and privilege to join you today as you give your time and energy to fight human trafficking. Nancy Rivard, flight attendant and founder of Airline Ambassadors along with Deborah Sigmund of Innocents at Risk, have been unrelenting in their pursuit to equip and empower flight crews to stop human trafficking on U. S. airlines.

I have never forgotten Nancy's first visit to my office, during which she told me about her meeting in the Caribbean with a few friends to discuss human trafficking on the airlines and what could be done about it. They each had separate international flights back to the U.S. After talking about the telltale signs of trafficking, each friend was able to spot an actual case of human trafficking on their flights.

I was astounded. Women and children are being trafficked in broad daylight, shrouded only by the lack of awareness or inaction of those around them.

In July of 2010, I hosted a conference on Capitol Hill to bring together the relevant U.S. agencies, such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Patrol, various US airlines, and Airline Ambassadors, and Innocents at Risk.

For too long, flight crews had been overlooked by enforcement authorities in the fight against human trafficking. That has finally changed.

The fact of the matter is that flight crews are on the front lines of defense for the vulnerable and the deceived.

You are those eyes. You are those ears. You can protect that little girl who thinks she is going to New York for a "modeling career" from disappearing into the dark underworld of sexual slavery.

You are in the position to see what is amiss on your flights and to report your concerns to the proper authorities.

As you know, the Department of Homeland Security has gotten on board in coordinating with the airlines. A hotline has been developed, and trainings like these are springing up across the country.

Delta Airlines has become the first US airline to sign the ECPAT Code of Conduct and commit to doing what they can to fight human trafficking in the travel industry. I applaud their courage and leadership.

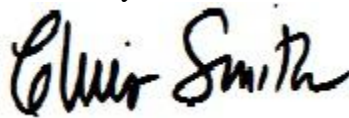
But this training is not about good airlines and bad airlines. This is about good people understanding the world in which they live, and acting like good citizens.

It was Edmund Burke who noted that “All it will take for evil to prevail is for good people to do nothing.” Sometimes good people just don’t know what to do. Nancy and Airline Ambassadors are closing that gap.

Nancy and other observant members of flight crews have saved scores of young people from disaster and likely death just by being observant and knowing who to call. And I have no doubt that, as a result of this training today, hundreds, maybe thousands, more lives will be saved.

Thank you for your time and your willingness to utilize your position on the front lines. With that I will let you get back to your training.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress