



PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MP Shocked as NDP Obstructs Passage of
Human Trafficking Bill C-310
Bill Now Not Expected to Pass Until End of May**

Ottawa, ON - March 30, 2012: Today, Bill C-310, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons), was expected to be adopted unanimously by the House of Commons at Third Reading and sent to the Senate. However, at the last minute, the NDP prevented debate on Bill C-310 and delayed the Bill from passing until the end of May.

"I am absolutely stunned by this," said MP Joy Smith. "Bill C-310 will strengthen Canada's efforts to combat human trafficking and this should not be a partisan matter. I have worked so hard to secure the support of all parties and have appreciated the support of all MPs for this Bill up until today."

"At each stage of this Bill, I have reached out to members of other parties," stated MP Smith. "In advance of today's Report Stage and Third Reading, I spoke with the NDP and Liberal House Leaders to secure their support for Bill C-310 to be adopted today. They assured me that they were fully supportive of Bill C-310 being adopted today. Then, about 10 minutes before debate was to begin, I was shocked to find out that the NDP would be opposing Bill C-310."

"What is most astounding is that the NDP have been fully supportive of Bill C-310 at Second Reading and Committee stages. They have even jointly seconded this Bill," says MP Smith. "My heart sank when I watched as they stood, smiling and shouted 'NO!' when the Speaker of the House sought consent."

As a result of today's actions, Bill C-310 will be voted on next Wednesday, and will drop to the bottom of the Order of Precedence instead of heading to the Senate.

"I don't have any answers as to why this happened," said MP Smith. "I would invite Canadians to write or call NDP members for an explanation of why they would vote against such an important, bipartisan Bill and deliberately hold it up."

"Today, modern day slavery exists in all corners of our globe and our resolve to eliminate it must only grow stronger," said MP Smith. "In fact, only yesterday, a judge handed out the toughest penalty for human trafficking in Canadian history for an egregious case of forced labour." Bill C-310 amends the Criminal Code by adding the current trafficking in persons offences [s.279.01, s.279.011, s.279.02, and s.279.03] to the list of offences which, if committed outside of Canada by a Canadian or permanent resident, could be prosecuted in Canada. The Bill also adds an interpretive aid for courts to provide greater clarity of the definition of exploitation in s.279.04 of the Criminal Code.

Since introducing Bill C-310, MP Joy Smith has presented petitions containing 1000's of signatures from Canadians calling for the adoption of the legislation. Many organizations have also lent their support for this legislation, representing stakeholders such as law enforcement, victim's services, and non-governmental organizations.

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About Joy Smith, MP:

MP Joy Smith holds a Bachelor's Degree (B.Ed.) and a Master's Degree (M.Ed.) in education and was a teacher for 23 years devoted to educating high school students in mathematics and science.

Mrs. Smith is also a best-selling author and a recipient of the Hedley Award for Excellence in Research. She was nominated as Manitoba's Woman Entrepreneur of the Year. She is also a wife and mother of six children. Before becoming Member of Parliament for Kildonan - St. Paul, Mrs. Smith was the Member of the Manitoba Legislature (MLA) for Fort Garry and served as critic for Justice, Education, and Intergovernmental (Urban) Affairs. She also led the Manitoba Task Force for Building Sustainable Communities.

Mrs. Smith has been recognized as one of Canada's leading anti-trafficking activists. Since being elected, Mrs. Smith has led the discussion on human trafficking at a national level which has resulted important changes in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Her continued efforts to raise the issue of human trafficking on the Status of Women Committee resulted in an intensive study of the issue by the committee and the release of highly regarded report on human trafficking in 2007 called Turning Outrage Into Action. One of her major achievements was the unanimous passing by the House of Commons in 2007 of her Private Members Motion M-153 on human trafficking which called on Parliament to condemn the trafficking of women and children across international borders for the purposes of sexual exploitation and to immediately adopt a comprehensive strategy to combat the trafficking of persons worldwide.

For more information please, visit www.joysmith.ca.