**ABHMS Signs Statement Against Human Trafficking**

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 10/7/15)**—As a member of the [Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility](http://www.iccr.org/) (ICCR), American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) has joined with more than 100 investors representing U.S. and international public pension funds, unions, faith institutions and socially responsible asset management firms in signing a statement to the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs and the House of Representatives Financial Services Committee urging strong bi-partisan support for The Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act of 2015 (H.R. 3226/S.1968). Collectively, the investors represent more than $1 trillion in assets under management.

The new bill calls on corporations to strengthen their commitments to end human trafficking and modern-day slavery by requiring them to disclose the policies and management systems they have in place to better identify and eradicate these violations within their global supply chains. Specifically, the bills would require public disclosures around auditing and verification procedures, risk assessments, training, remediation plans and accountability mechanisms that address trafficking and slavery risks.

The bill was introduced into the House of Representatives by Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and co-sponsored by Chris Smith (R-NJ), with a companion bill introduced in the Senate by Sen. Richard Blumenthal (R-CT). Both bills would require companies with gross receipts in excess of $100 million worldwide to report to the Securities and Exchange Commission their efforts to identify and address risks of forced labor, including child labor and human trafficking, both within their operations and throughout their supply chains.

The proposed legislation comes against the backdrop of the passage of the California Transparency in Supply Chain Act, the Modern Slavery Bill in the UK, and President Obama’s executive order directing the Federal Acquisition Registry to require all government contractors to certify due diligence in confronting and remediating human trafficking in their extended supply chains. These measures are evidence of growing acknowledgment among policy makers of the importance of strengthened supply chain oversight to ensure that multi-national corporations are not unwittingly complicit in human rights abuses.

“Our own research has made clear that forced labor and slavery persists. While geographies where workers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation through poverty and forced displacement due to political conflict are at much greater risk, all companies have some level of exposure to these human rights violations and, for this reason, global investors are united in their calls for stronger laws to help eradicate them,” said David Schilling, senior program director, Human Rights and Resources, ICCR. “In introducing The Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act, Rep. Maloney, Rep. Smith and Sen. Blumenthal recognize the moral responsibility that companies have to do everything in their power to ensure that their supply chains are slavery free, wherever they conduct business. We urge Congress to pass this legislation which we believe will be an important tool for all stakeholders to uncover and eradicate human trafficking.”

A coalition of approximately 300 faith-based institutional investors, ICCR seeks to transform the corporate world by integrating social values into corporate and investor actions. ABHMS is a founding member of ICCR.

*American Baptist Home Mission Societies—the domestic mission arm of American Baptist Churches USA—ministers as the caring heart and serving hands of Jesus Christ across the United States and Puerto Rico through a multitude of initiatives that focus on discipleship, community and justice.*

*American Baptist Churches is one of the most diverse Christian denominations today, with over 5,200 local congregations comprised of 1.3 million members, across the United States and Puerto Rico, all engaged in God’s mission around the world.*