

Representative Chris Smith (R)

As a Member of the United States House of Representatives from New Jersey, Chris Smith has championed the rights and interests of many - from children forced to toil in sweatshops to women kidnapped and sold into lives of prostitution to unborn children whose opportunity for life is threatened. Smith has dedicated his life to protecting human rights and helping the world's most vulnerable.

Smith has represented the citizens of New Jersey's Fourth Congressional District since 1981, when he was sworn into office at the age of 27. Throughout his 28 years of service, he has established himself as one of the hardest-working, most compassionate and dedicated members of the House.

Smith - a nationally and internationally renowned leader in Congress particularly in the areas of human rights, religious freedom, veterans' affairs and healthcare - is an equally passionate local advocate who tirelessly applies his energy toward meeting local and state challenges.

As a champion of global human rights since being elected to Congress, Smith is a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Ranking Republican of the Committee's Africa and Global Health Subcommittee.

Smith also serves as a Ranking Member of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (also known as the United States Helsinki Commission), which works to promote and foster democracy, human rights, and stability in Eastern and Central Europe, and on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China which monitors human rights and the development of the rule of law in China.

One of Smith's significant legislative achievements is his landmark Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Law, the nation's first law that deals specifically with human trafficking. In January, 2006, President Bush signed Smith's third trafficking law – the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2005. Smith authored the legislation to strengthen the nation's current trafficking law, provide new funds for investigation and prosecution of domestic trafficking within the United States and to help the young women and children who are most often the victims of human trafficking operations. This bill will provide \$361 million over the next two years to combat trafficking.

He began investigating and working to end the human trafficking epidemic in the mid-1990's. Trafficking is a \$9 billion industry, the third largest source of income for organized crime and the second fastest growing criminal activity in the world, equal with illegal arms sales.

Smith's original law provided government prosecutors with the resources needed to prosecute offenders as well as resources to help victims rebuild their lives. In 2003, a second Smith trafficking law – the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act – took effect and further strengthened his original law.

His original trafficking law also reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act, the most significant law to help protect women who are victims of rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence. Like the trafficking component, the VAWA reauthorization works to ensure prosecution of offenders and help the victims recover.

Smith authored the landmark Embassy Security Act. This law recognized the threat posed by global terrorism years before the September 11 terror attacks and authorized an investment of billions of dollars to better fortify U.S. embassies.

Over the years, Smith has also played a key role in promoting human rights reforms in the former Soviet Union, Romania, Vietnam, China, the Sudan, Cuba, and elsewhere. He has worked toward a just and lasting peace in Northern Ireland and an end of the discrimination against Catholics. He wrote the provision of the law that barred Northern Ireland Police (formerly the RUC) from training in the United States with U.S. law enforcement personnel until it was certified that the police met stringent human rights standards. That certification was granted in December 2001 by President Bush.

In 2005, Smith's tireless work paid dividends when four of his bills were signed into law by President Bush, including the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005. Also signed into law was Smith's "Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005," which provides \$265 million for stem cell therapy, umbilical cord blood and bone marrow treatment. It also authorizes \$79 million for the collection of cord blood stem cells. Thousands have been successfully treated with cord blood stem cells for more than 67 diseases including Leukemia and Sickle Cell Anemia – which affects thousands of African Americans – and Smith's bill assures that these miracle treatments will now be available to tens of thousands of patients in need of transplant.

Smith wrote the "Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act," which also became law. This law provides \$90 million in assistance to torture victims around the world over the next two years, including 400,000 survivors in the United States. It also provides \$75 million in grants for rehabilitation services to assist victims of torture in foreign and domestic treatment centers and other torture relief assistance.

Smith also authored a law that would allow for United States participation in the Regional Emerging Diseases Intervention Center in Singapore in order to promote regional health security. The law will allow the federal government to send Health and Human Services infectious disease experts to the REDI Center to provide training and research to workers there so they can respond to disease outbreaks and bioterrorism attacks. One of the first priorities of the Center will be to combat the threat of pandemic flu.

From 2001 to 2004, Smith served as Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, a panel responsible for the well-being of our nation's 25 million military veterans. The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs oversees the \$63.8 billion provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs for healthcare and other benefit programs. Smith worked to improve the delivery of healthcare and benefits promised to our nation's veterans, and has delivered with several new laws to significantly expand and enhance veterans' health care and benefits programs.

Veterans laws authored by Smith include one providing a record 60 percent increase in the GI Bill which helps veterans pay for college. The increase is the largest ever since the GI Bill went into effect following World War II, helping to build the American middle class.

Smith also wrote the nation's first law that addresses and combats the plague of chronic homelessness among veterans. The Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act authorizes \$1 billion in programs to help veterans find and retain jobs and provides them with housing, counseling, and medical care they need to rebuild their lives.

In addition to his work on human rights, veterans, and international relations issues, Congressman Smith is very active in several healthcare issues, serving as Co-Chairman of the bipartisan Congressional Alzheimer's Task Force, Coalition for Autism Research and Education, and Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus. He also Co-Chairs the bipartisan Congressional Pro-Life Caucus.

One of his most notable health laws is Title I of the Children's Health Act which authorized a massive surveillance project in an effort to learn what causes autism. The bill established Centers of Excellence to conduct this vital work. One of the surveillance centers is currently operating in New Jersey.

A resident of Hamilton, Chris and his wife Marie have four adult children.