

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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**SANDERS AMENDMENT BANNING THE IMPORTATION OF PRODUCTS MADE BY
INDENTURED CHILD LABOR PASSES HOUSE**

Congressman Bernard Sanders announced today that an amendment of his passed the House last week which would effectively prohibit the importation of any product made by forced or indentured child labor. The amendment, part of the Treasury and Postal Services Appropriations bill, will now go to the House-Senate conference committee which is scheduled to meet this week.

Sanders appeared at a press conference at Essex High School along with Vermont high school students who are actively participating in an international effort to end sweatshop labor and the economic exploitation of children.

Sanders said; "It is a moral outrage that throughout this world today, some two hundred million children are being exploited economically and will never see the inside of a classroom. Many of these children are making products exported for sale in shopping malls, sporting goods stores, and oriental rug shops all across America.

"Especially outrageous is the plight of millions of child laborers, some as young as 4-years old, who are sold into virtual slavery (i.e. bonded and indentured laborers) and chained to looms for 14-hours a day hand knotting the oriental rugs that grace the foyers and living rooms of countless homes and offices all across our country. These indentured children toil in factories, mines, fields, and even in brothels - sacrificing their youth, health and innocence for little or no wages.

"It is simply not acceptable that the United States imports products produced by bonded children who are sold in financial transactions like cattle. It is not acceptable that we import products made by children who are sold by their parent or guardian - often as a result of an outstanding debt, and are then put in a position where they are treated like slaves - working year after year to pay off a debt which never becomes reduced because the child is charged for his/her food and lodging, and for any mistakes they invariably make on the job. If some of these children try to escape, as is not uncommon, they are hunted down by their captors and local officials - and are often beaten. Sometimes, they are deliberately maimed to punish them.

"One well known case involved, Iqbal Masih, a young Pakistani boy who was sold by his parents for \$12 when he was 5 years old. He worked in isolation for 7 years hand-knotting oriental rugs for export before he escaped his captors. He became active with the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude and visited schools in the United States, and spoke before the United Nations before he was murdered two years ago upon his return to Pakistan. His case is not uncommon.

"I am delighted to be here today with young Vermonters who are working hard to address this extremely important issue. I am proud that they have chosen to stand with, and defend, some of the most exploited people in the world - indentured children."