



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Human Trafficking Legal Center promotes Sarah L. Bessell to Deputy Director

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Human Trafficking Legal Center is thrilled to announce the promotion of Senior Staff Attorney Sarah L. Bessell to the role of Deputy Director.

Lorie Masters, Chair of the Board of Directors for the Human Trafficking Legal Center and a partner at Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP, said, “Sarah Bessell has led the Human Trafficking Legal Center’s international training and strategic litigation efforts. She has traveled the globe to press for accountability for human trafficking and forced labor. Her promotion to deputy director is a recognition of her skill, her excellence, and her professionalism. The Board welcomes this promotion and looks forward to working with Sarah for years to come.”



Sarah joined the Human Trafficking Legal Center in Fall 2015 as a legal fellow. Since her arrival, Sarah has managed the organization’s international programs, built the organization’s strategic litigation work, and provided technical assistance to pro bono counsel representing trafficking survivors in immigration and civil cases. Sarah was promoted to senior staff attorney in Fall 2019. Among her many accomplishments, Sarah has secured immigration relief and compensation for trafficking survivors. She has authored important reports for the organization, including a guide on holding U.S. citizens accountable for sexually abusing children under the PROTECT Act.

As Deputy Director, Sarah will bolster the organization’s capacity and reach. She has dedicated herself to the organization’s mission to hold traffickers accountable for their crimes through litigation, research, and advocacy. In Sarah’s new position, she will play a key role in implementing the organization’s strategic plan. She will work closely with Martina E. Vandenberg, founder and president of the Human Trafficking Legal Center, to lead the organization in pursuing justice for trafficking survivors.

Martina Vandenberg congratulated Sarah on her promotion. She stated, “Sarah Bessell has made immense contributions to the Human Trafficking Legal Center, and to the larger anti-trafficking field. Sarah is a fierce advocate, a brilliant lawyer, and a wonderful colleague. She is a leader in the global anti-trafficking community. In this new position, I am confident that Sarah will continue to grow as a leader in this movement. We are thrilled that Sarah has devoted her tremendous talents and skills to this mission. Her promotion to deputy director is simply an acknowledgement of the leadership role that she already plays.”

Sarah came to the Human Trafficking Legal Center with a strong background in international human rights and conflict prevention. Sarah spent time in Cambodia, where she interned in the Office of the International Co-Prosecutor of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. She previously worked on international conflict resolution issues at the University for Peace in Ethiopia and at the U.S. Institute of Peace. Sarah holds a J.D. from the George Washington University Law School and an M.A. (Conflict Resolution) from Georgetown University.

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About the Human Trafficking Legal Center

At the Human Trafficking Legal Center, we believe that when human trafficking survivors have lawyers, survivors have rights. We create a bridge between trafficking survivors and highly skilled pro bono legal representation. Together, we work to hold traffickers accountable for their crimes through civil litigation and criminal restitution. The Human Trafficking Legal Center seeks compensation for survivors so that they can reclaim their lives. We are a non-profit organization, monitoring the federal government and working to improve federal policy to benefit trafficking survivors. Learn more at www.htlegalcenter.org. Follow the Human Trafficking Legal Center on [Facebook](#) and on [Twitter](#).