Truckers Against Trafficking: Driving Education to Put a Dent in Human Trafficking

As a coalition of faith-based and values-driven institutional investors, members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) are committed to rooting out human trafficking and slavery in the operations and supply chains of the companies they own. As made clear by the United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights, and via emerging legislation both at the state and federal levels, corporations have a responsibility to respect human rights within their operations and spheres of impact. While some sectors are more vulnerable to these human rights violations than others, no sector or company is completely free from these risks.

From exposing slavery in the overseas apparel, tech, fishing and agricultural industries to highlighting sex trafficking risks in the tourism sector, ICCR and its allies have been educating corporations about best practices to both expose and prevent trafficking and slavery in global supply chains for decades. The transportation sector has been a focus for ICCR for many years, and, at our urging, several airline companies in our portfolios have made a commitment to address trafficking and now provide awareness training for their personnel to help thwart these abuses.

The trucking industry, embedded in the supply chains of virtually every industry, is especially well-positioned to raise awareness and thwart human trafficking incidents, particularly incidents of sex trafficking. We believe the Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) program is fast becoming a successful, nationwide, anti-trafficking education model, providing resources and training for truckers to help them identify and respond to potential incidents of trafficking that may otherwise go unreported.

Recognizing that truckers can serve as critical warning systems from the field, TAT has developed materials, such as their industry-specific training DVD and wallet cards, which provide truckers with trafficking hotline education and information to aide local law enforcement in combatting these crimes. TAT also partners with law enforcement and motor vehicles agencies on a state-by-state basis to provide anti-trafficking training to anyone seeking a commercial driver’s license.

The next step in driving this education throughout the trucking industry is TAT’s Shipping Partner’s Program, meant to educate and engage large, national shippers, including big box retailers and grocery chains like Best Buy, Target and Kroger’s. Because these companies have extensive trucking networks, often numbering in the tens of thousands, they can have enormous influence with the trucking community and, in turn, make a huge dent in combatting trafficking and saving lives.

“ICCR looks forward to continuing our partnership with TAT in our future engagements with relevant companies to urge adoption of the TAT training program,” said Pat Zerega, senior director of shareholder advocacy, Mercy Investment Services. “TAT has had significant impact on the trucking industry by building awareness and getting commitments from truck drivers to company executives.”