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THE ‘EXTREMISTS’ WHO WANT TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR GOOD

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TOPLINE POINTS

- ★ The box office hit *Sound of Freedom* tells the true story of Tim Ballard, an American who rescued victims of child sex trafficking in Colombia.
- ★ Supporters of the movie who have dealt directly with human trafficking are advocating for harsher penalties for pedophiles, securing the U.S.-Mexico border, and stopping the commercial demand for sexual exploitation.
- ★ These actions run counter to the Left’s policy agenda, which is why they are defaming the movie and its supporters as extremists.

The message of box office hit *Sound of Freedom* is strong and simple: “God’s children are not for sale.” With America built on the belief in the inherent dignity of persons, one would not expect this theme to be controversial or problematic, especially when it comes to preventing human trafficking. We do not want the perpetrators of modern-day slavery to be free to harm vulnerable children on our shores or anywhere else. And yet even as the movie has captured the attention of the Nation, its critics are trying to steal the stage, accusing the production of being extremist, overtly political, inaccurate in its portrayal of sex trafficking, and guilty of promoting conspiracies. While these accusations disparage the real-life heroism of Tim Ballard, as portrayed in the movie, there seems to be a more nefarious reason this film is being slandered.

Seeing the cold reality of child sex trafficking in a movie like *Sound of Freedom* makes one glaring point very clear: we need to stop criminal exploiters of children and protect the vulnerable at all costs. But translating this into a policy agenda to end human trafficking for good presents a problem: the actions needed to achieve this run counter to the agenda of far-Left progressives who make up many of our Nation’s elites.



When engaging with the producers, actors, and supporters of the movie *Sound of Freedom*, a very different reality emerges—these individuals are a far cry from ‘extremists’ as portrayed by the Left. Last month, *Sound of Freedom* actress Mira Sorvino led several panels at the International Summit Against Human Trafficking in Washington, D.C. The summit gathered a group of passionate activists against human trafficking, organized by Rosi Orozco, a leader in the fight in Mexico. Drawing both American and Mexican activists, local Mexican leaders, trafficking survivors, law enforcement officers, pastors, policymakers, and members of various rescuer groups, the conversation featured candid discussions about lived experiences of human trafficking and animated debates about how to end modern-day slavery.

To put it bluntly, these individuals from both Mexico and the U.S. support *Sound of Freedom* because they have personally experienced the issues it portrays. They know it is not fear-mongering or conspiratorial to raise awareness about the countless children being exploited in our Nation and elsewhere. They recounted stories of how easily women and children are lured into sex trafficking by people they know, how they take seemingly promising jobs that turn out to be punishing sex work, or how they become trapped in debt from a smuggler who repeatedly exploits them. This dedicated group of activists working against trafficking is partnering with policymakers, some of whom have already made a difference in the U.S. and Mexico. To end human trafficking, especially child sex trafficking, they are fighting for the following solutions:

Implementing stronger penalties. Former trafficking victims, law enforcement, and rescuers agreed that the perpetrators will continue their evil behavior if consequences are not imposed. As Rosi Orozco said, the crucial step to stop child exploiters is to hold all those involved with perpetrating this crime, including the client, strictly accountable under the law. Panelists at the summit spoke about how either weak criminal laws or tough laws that are not enforced only perpetuate exploitation of the vulnerable. Unfortunately, in cities and states around the Nation, progressives have notoriously advocated for more relaxed criminal penalties across the board, mostly in misguided efforts to promote social justice, thereby jeopardizing public safety and leaving little recourse for victims. And just recently, in the California legislature, [a bill](#) that would have made child trafficking a “serious felony,” thus raising the severity of the penalty to be comparable to crimes such as murder or rape, was voted down by progressives in the California State Assembly. Conversely, local Mexican leaders received awards at the D.C. summit for their work on criminalizing and shutting down strip clubs and instituting harsher penalties for human trafficking. It is worth noting that those who have seen sex trafficking in action advocate for tougher enforcement because they know it works.

Securing the border. The U.S.-Mexico border is a massive channel for smuggling innocent women and children, many of whom end up trapped in prostitution for the rest



of their lives. *Sound of Freedom* depicts an instance of a sex trafficker attempting to cross through a port of entry with false documentation for a child, raising awareness of how vulnerable migrants are forcibly kidnapped or lured into sex work. These stories have been widely [reported](#) on for decades, but few Americans understand that less security on the southern border only makes it easier for cartels and traffickers to exploit innocent children. Rosi has said, “I have interviewed both traffickers and their victims, and everyone who has crossed the border from Mexico to the United States admits that they crossed with impunity. A pimp who was in jail boasted to me about how easy it was to cross with minor girls 16 and 17 years old.” These victims often end up captured and trafficked for sex work at the many hotspots in [South Texas and California](#). Securing the border will help end the supply of vulnerable migrants to be taken advantage of by traffickers, but the Left has [never been more against](#) the proven deterrence and enforcement policies to make this a reality.

Stopping the demand. As Tim Ballard, the real-life hero of *Sound of Freedom*, has said, human trafficking is the fastest-growing criminal enterprise in the world. Too often, Americans believe it is not happening within our borders, when the [reality](#) is that we are the largest consumers of child exploitation and that our country is a top destination where this exploitation takes place. Panelists at the summit agreed that little progress will be made in ending human trafficking until it is harder for people to act on the demand for sexual exploitation. Restricting more explicit online content, ending trafficking advertisements on social media, and returning to a religiously centered society are just some ways to strip traffickers of this demand. However, the modern-day Left is unrivaled in our Nation’s history in their support of child sexualization and the demonization of religion, especially Christianity.

From the actors and producers of *Sound of Freedom*, to Rosi Orozco, to the local Mexican leaders who took a stand against sex trafficking in their city, each of these individuals has been targeted and demonized for their courage. In both Mexico and the U.S., there is strong resistance to the forces that seek to end human trafficking once and for all. Most Americans watching *Sound of Freedom* probably came out of the movie wondering: how does the terrible practice of child exploitation continue to occur in our modern world? In our country? Perhaps the criticism of this movie is part of the answer. While we name-call and fight among ourselves about alleged extremism, the traffickers and child exploiters continue to win. *Sound of Freedom* has shown the world who really cares about protecting the vulnerable—for the movie’s supporters, it’s not the critic who counts.

