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Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 59

Presented to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary

**By Jennifer Montgomery, Public Affairs Director
Director, Human Trafficking Education and Outreach
Chair, Human Trafficking Advisory Board**

February 2, 2021

Chair Warren and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony in support of Senate Bill 59.

The attorney general's office is home of the Human Trafficking Advisory Board (HTAB) which was established in January 2010 to explore the issues of human trafficking in the state of Kansas. In 2013, the Kansas Legislature recognized the Board as the state's official Human Trafficking Advisory Board. This team of advisers is composed of law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, court personnel, advocates, survivors of human trafficking and other pertinent parties who have expertise in this field. Senate Bill 59 was first introduced during the 2020 session as Senate Bill 373. That bill passed the Senate 40-0, and recommended favorably by the House Judiciary Committee, but unfortunately was not considered on the House floor prior to the Legislature's early adjournment last year. The HTAB is again recommending the bill this year.

Senate Bill 59 contains language amending our human trafficking statutes to more accurately reflect the realities of human trafficking situations. In 2013, groups advocating for survivors of human trafficking asked for the removal of the terms "prostitute" and "prostitution" from our Kansas Statutes. There is a stigma attached to those words. Since that time, our anti-trafficking laws have used the term "sexual relations" as in, "buying or selling sexual relations." Today, we have evolved even further in our awareness and understanding of the dynamics involved in sex trafficking. The HTAB has recommended we amend our current language to say a "sex act" which is a more neutral term and does not imply consent.

Thank you for your attention to these matters, and we encourage your adoption of this bill, as recommended by the Human Trafficking Advisory Board.

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