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**House Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care  
Testimony in support of House Bill 2153**  
Presented by Michelle McCormick, Director of Victim Services  
Office of the Attorney General  
February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Chair Concannon and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2153. My name is Michelle McCormick and I am the director of victim services and state victim rights coordinator for Attorney General Kris Kobach. In this capacity, I also serve on the state anti-human trafficking advisory board. Prior to this role, I worked at a private non-profit organization that provided direct services to victims of human trafficking, where my colleagues and I served hundreds of exploited sex trafficking victims here in Topeka.

The state of Kansas has made tremendous progress in the last decade in creating stronger laws, increasing awareness and improving coordinated responses to better intervene in human trafficking. However, our work is incomplete. Vulnerable Kansans, both youth and adults, continue to experience the exploitation of labor and sex trafficking in our urban and rural communities.

One of the challenges impeding our processes for a stronger response to human trafficking is that incidents of human trafficking are severely underreported. One contributing factor to this is a lack of consistent, evidence-based training for professionals who may have the opportunity to identify when trafficking may be occurring. Though the topic of human trafficking has at times captured the attention of the public, there has unfortunately been a problem with misinformation and a lack of common understanding about what human trafficking actually looks like in Kansas. There have been significant efforts to provide training on human trafficking identification in some communities and in some areas of practice, there has not been a coordinated structure across disciplines.

Experts in the field of human trafficking agree that an effective way to begin intervention is to have a multidisciplinary response where professionals in law enforcement, child welfare, the



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health care field, social services and others train in a common understanding of the red flag indicators of human trafficking. The Office of the Attorney General has spent the last 10 years+ providing training on human trafficking identification and investigation to law enforcement and victim service providers. In consultation with Shared Hope International and the National Advisory Council on the Sex Trafficking of Children and Youth in the United States (NAC), the Office of the Attorney General is now recommending that you pass this law, which will require a minimum amount of training for the other key partners in the multidisciplinary response.

The Office of the Attorney General coordinates the state anti-human trafficking advisory board and through the work of this multidisciplinary group, believes that we can work with the appropriate state agencies or licensure groups to coordinate this effort. HB 2153 focuses on professions identified as mandatory reporters, given that human trafficking is a form of abuse. This one-hour annual training requirement will arm Kansas mandatory reporters with the information they need to report suspected human trafficking with confidence.

I received my first training on the issue of human trafficking 10 years ago. Prior to that, I would have likely told you that human trafficking does not happen here and was a social problem that only plagues foreign countries or places far from here. By receiving training by the Office of the Attorney General, my professional blinders were removed and my commitment to ending this exploitation for those exploited right here at home was solidified.

To have the most effective response to human trafficking statewide, we have to create a shared understanding of human trafficking indicators, a shared understanding of the risk factors for victimization, and an increased knowledge of how to report these concerns. This is why we ask for your support of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information with the Committee.

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