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**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2779**  
**Presented to the House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee**  
**By Attorney General Derek Schmidt**  
**March 14, 2012**

Chair Colloton, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2779, which will strengthen our anti-human trafficking laws in Kansas.

I have been grateful for the strong interest in this subject by many members of the legislature. Early this year, I was approached by interested legislators and encouraged to help bring forward legislation to strengthen Kansas's response to human trafficking. In response to those requests, I broadened the membership on the Attorney General's Human Trafficking Advisory Board and convened the board to discuss possible legislation. The Board recommended pursuing legislation this year, and I am particularly grateful to Assistant Attorney General Christine Ladner, Assistant Attorney General Kyle Smith, and Deputy District Attorney Sedgwick County Marc Bennett -- along with many other contributors -- for their work in developing this legislation.

This bill proposes a strong step forward for the ongoing Kansas fight against human trafficking. In recent years, we have put in place strong criminal penalties for traffickers as well as critical law enforcement tools such as asset forfeiture. This bill proposes to build on that. Some highlights of the bill include:

- Strengthening the role of the Office of the Attorney General in providing training and support for local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors in human trafficking investigations and prosecutions.
- Strengthening the law that prohibits the use of 14 to 17-year-olds for commercial sex services by creating the new crime Commercial Sexual Exploitation of a Child.
- Strengthening support for victims of human trafficking and providing a source of funding for victim-support services.
- Strengthening the ability of courts to remove victims of human trafficking from the circumstance in which they are trafficked.

I believe this is a strong and reasonable step to take this year, and I'm grateful for the Committee's interest. Our office looks forward to working closely with you and others in the legislature to make this measure a reality -- and by so doing, to better protect the dignity of human beings who are subjected to this modern form of slavery.

I will ask Assistant Attorney General Christine Ladner, who handles human trafficking prosecutions in our office and who chairs my Human Trafficking Advisory Board, to talk in more detail about this proposal. I would be happy to stand for questions.

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