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**Testimony in Support of HB 2779**

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Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference

**House Standing Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice**

March 14, 2012

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Catholic Conference is the public policy office of the Catholic Church in Kansas. We wish to offer our support for this bill and for all efforts to eliminate the disgraceful, repugnant practice of human trafficking.

It has been estimated that as many as 700,000 persons are trafficked globally each year, with perhaps as many as 17,000 human beings trafficked into the United States annually. Most Americans would never imagine that there are people in their midst who are living as modern day slaves, but this is in fact so.

The Second Vatican Council declared in 1965 that slavery, prostitution, and the selling of women and children are “infamies” that “poison human society.” Ten years ago, Pope John Paul II wrote that “the trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offense against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights,” and that “the sexual exploitation of women and children is a particularly repugnant aspect of this trade, and must be recognized as an intrinsic violation of human dignity and human rights.”

In order to fight human trafficking, Kansas needs to enhance its efforts to identify victims, to care for them after rescue, and to punish perpetrators. This bill is a step in the right direction. We support the Legislature and the Attorney General in this initiative.

Thank you for your consideration.

House Corrections & Juvenile Justice  
Committee  
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MOST REVEREND MICHAEL O. JACKELS, S.T.D.  
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