

Approved: February 14, 2012

(January 17, 2012)

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mike Kiegerl at 9:05 a.m. on Tuesday, January 17, 2012, in Room 142S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

June Christensen, Committee Assistant
Renaë Jefferies, Office of the Kansas Revisor of Statutes
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Jay Hall, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Assistant Attorney General Christine Ladner
Sedgwick County Assistant District Attorney Marc Bennett
Kristy Childs, Founder of Veronica's Voice
Atchison County Attorney, Jerry Kuckelman

Others in attendance:

See attached list.

Chairperson Kiegerl recognized Representative Gregory to introduce a proposed bill regarding funding for the developmentally disabled.

Motion by Representative Gregory to introduce a proposed bill regarding funding for the developmentally disabled. Seconded by Representative Rubin and carried unanimously.

Chairperson Kiegerl noted this morning's meeting is the topic of human trafficking, a very serious issue that the Attorney General office is addressing. Several proposed bills will be introduced, and he assured that this committee would be in full support of them. He welcomed the four speakers.

Human Trafficking

Assistant Attorney General Christine Ladner

Ms. Ladner presented an overview of case studies regarding human trafficking in Kansas, which she said comprises commercial sex exploitation and forced labor or services. More than 250,000

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

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American citizens and legal residents, mostly children under age 18, are being trafficked within this country. Of the two, trafficking for sexual purposes happens more frequently. Federal law, *Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000*, addresses many of these issues, but there is still much to be done, particularly statewide. It is a very lucrative business for those who prey upon children and women. (Attachments 1 and 2).

Sedgwick County Assistant District Attorney Marc Bennett

Mr. Bennett addressed several cases, either already settled or pending, in the Wichita area, and explained how easily some victims fall into this lifestyle. Most come from an unstable home situation and are runaways and are an easy target for those in the business of human trafficking. He cited several cases in Sedgwick County that are in various stages of prosecution with some victims taken out of state, so Kansas laws were not applicable there. Even though there has been some progress regarding the ability to prosecute the perpetrators, much needs to be done, and a bill will be introduced shortly. (Attachment 3).

Kristy Childs, Founder of Veronica's Voice

Ms. Childs addressed the committee, informing them that she had been a victim of trafficking from the age of 12 to 36 as a result of family issues and no place to go. She indicated that the owners of these services and the victims are often singled out, but those who receive these services are often let go without any form of prosecution, and she believed those persons should also be held accountable. Magdalene Manor, a home for 16 women, who have found themselves in those circumstances, will be opening in the Kansas City area shortly. A conference will be held in April that will have experts throughout the country who will address the demand side of the issue. (Attachment 4).

Atchison County Attorney Jerry Kuckelman

Mr. Kuckelman said that one of his cases in Atchison County was not that of sexual human trafficking but forced labor/services. He cited the example of a family living in rural Atchison County. The man whom the mother and her four children lived with was involved in a metal stripping business, and forced the children and their mother to use various tools to prepare the metal so he could sell it. He was also sexually involved with the 14-year-old daughter. However, the case was not able to be prosecuted, because the parties involved were intimidated and refused to testify against the man. (No written testimony)

Ms. Ladner concluded the presentation with information about the Human Trafficking Advisory Board, developed by former Attorney General Six and continuing with present Attorney General Schmidt, which will have a four-pronged approach: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and

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Partnership. Other community and faith-based organizations will also be involved in the effort to curtail these activities.

Representatives asked several questions of the presenters. Representative Brunk said the presenters will be repeating the information in a joint committee meeting at 1:30 p.m. today.

Ms. Dorsey distributed a copy of *The Regent University Law Review*. (Attachment 5).

Chairperson Kiegerl expressed appreciation for the comprehensive report and indicated the committee is in full support of the proposed legislation.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 24, 2012, at 9 a.m. in Room 142S.

Chairperson Kiegerl adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.