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**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 61
Human Trafficking**

**Presented to the House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee
By Attorney General Derek Schmidt**

March 7, 2013

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 61, which proposes a comprehensive and substantial strengthening of our Kansas laws to combat human trafficking.

For more than a year, I have worked closely with an inclusive coalition of state agencies, law enforcement, prosecutors, victim services providers, advocates, non-government organizations, and others to develop this legislation to improve our Kansas response to the scourge of human trafficking. I thank all who have worked so hard to develop this proposal. The bill before you represents a consensus product of that effort.

It was my pleasure to join with Governor Brownback to announce introduction of this measure.

This legislation has numerous provisions, but it focuses on two main areas:

- Creating the crime of commercial sexual exploitation of a child, which is aimed at filling a gap in our law through which relatively light criminal penalties attach to those who exploit 14- to 17-year-old children for commercial sex.
- Expanding our support services for victims of human trafficking, and paying for those expanded services through increased fines on those who create a demand for sex trafficking -- the "johns" who illegally pay for sexual services.

This is critical legislation. It is the next step in our longstanding Kansas commitment to standing up for human dignity. It is the next tool we need to protect our children. I encourage the Committee's favorable consideration.