



House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee
March 7, 2013

Senate Bill 61: Human Trafficking

Presented by:

Secretary Phyllis Gilmore

Kansas Department for Children and Families

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Chairman Rubin, Vice-Chair Gonzalez, Ranking Member Finney and Honored Members:

I am Phyllis Gilmore, Secretary of the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF).

We are pleased to have been involved in the Attorney General's Advisory Board on Human Trafficking, and are grateful for the work done by all the stakeholders involved.

Governor Brownback is a nationally recognized leader in the fight against human trafficking. His commitment to ending this abuse of basic human rights is longstanding and unwavering.

In 2000, as a United States Senator, Governor Brownback teamed with the late Sen. Paul Wellstone to enact the groundbreaking federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act. As Governor, he has continued this work, calling on Kansas to lead the nation in research on slavery and human trafficking.

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) estimates that at least 100,000 American children are victims of commercial sexual trafficking and prostitution each year. Dr. Richard Estes at the University of Pennsylvania, whose research is funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, estimates that the number of 10 to 17 year olds involved in commercial sexual exploitation in the US each year likely exceeds 250,000; 60 percent of the victims are runaway, throwaway or homeless youth.

Human trafficking is an issue that adversely affects all citizens and communities in Kansas and nationwide. This problem occurs not only in other countries as many may imagine. It is happening in our own back yards.

SB 61 establishes the Human Trafficking Advisory Board and Human Trafficking Victim Assistance Fund to assist victims and provide training in dealing with human trafficking. The bill further creates a "staff secure facility" as a placement option for victims of human trafficking.

Specific to DCF, SB 61 provides for a rapid response team to assess placement and treatment options for child victims of human trafficking. If appropriate, law enforcement, the courts, and the Secretary may utilize a "staff secure facility" as a placement option.

Youth victims of human trafficking exhibit many different needs. The rapid response team would utilize evidence-supported tools to assess appropriate treatment and placement options for these victims and make recommendations to District /County Attorneys and Judges based on these assessments. DCF's Division of Prevention and Protection Services currently works with child victims who have experienced a wide range of abuse and neglect, and stands ready to respond to these victims. The revisions to the Revised Code for the Care of Children which require a research-based assessment tool, rapid response team, treatment and recommendations to the Court will be in place as of the effective date of January 1, 2014. DCF is in agreement with the amendment of New Section 5 providing for the effective date of such provision as

January 1, 2014. Our vision for these children is for them to go from being victims to being survivors, regaining both their dignity and self-sufficiency.

DCF stands in strong support of SB 61 and of its purpose of providing additional tools to work with child victims of human trafficking appropriately and effectively.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to be here today to talk to you about this important piece of legislation. I am happy to stand for questions.

Phyllis Gilmore, Secretary
Kansas Department for Children and Families