

Proponent testimony for SB 527

TO: Chairman Sen. Thompson and members of the Committee of Federal and State Affairs

FROM: Terry Hund, Program Director, Project 2 Restore

DATE: March 19, 2024

Dear Chairman Thompson and committee members,

My name is Terry Hund, Program Director for Project 2 Restore, a long-term restoration home for women recovering from commercial sex trafficking in Topeka, KS. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of SB 527.

I support SB 527. I have walked alongside women who have experienced forced abortions while coerced in sex trafficking. Enduring the trauma of commercial sex trafficking is more than enough without the added trauma from a forced abortion. Over the last decade in my work of assisting women who have suffered from the devastation of sex trafficking, I encountered two memorable stories. I met one woman, age 27, while in the hospital after giving birth to twins at 26 weeks. She was thankful to have carried them as long as she did even though 1 precious child did not survive the birth. Over the next several weeks she shared some of her trafficking experiences and also shared that this birth experience was her 12th pregnancy. She then went on to explain that some may have been miscarriages, but others were drug induced by the trafficker to end her pregnancies. Why would they do this? The short answer is because her body was used to make her attractive to a buyer thus highly profitable for the trafficker.

Another young woman in her late twenties was forced into trafficking by a well-known family in the community, who sold her to other businessmen. When she became pregnant, she begged them to allow her to keep her baby. However, she was forced to have an abortion, a devastating abortion that she is convinced today was medically damaging to her body and will never allow her to conceive again should she marry and wish to have children. Why would they do this? She provided secret sexual experiences for those who purchased her for their pleasure. In addition, she was of high monetary value to those who continued to use her for their profit.

Sadly, stories like these are multiplied by the thousands as sex trafficking has become a national \$150 billion dollar industry with Kansas noted as a "supplier state" for traffickers. The cross-roads of highways from every direction makes us an easier target, and mid-western kindness is now considered a vulnerability. These women are not commodities, but have names, are someone's daughter, sister and friend. Individuals who have experienced trauma through commercial sex trafficking are among the most broken in our society and studies show it takes years or often a lifetime to heal. Forced abortions add to that devastation and those who destroy lives should be punished accordingly.

I am in support of SB 527. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Terry Hund