

Senate Judiciary Committee - 3/15/23 – PROPONENT HB 2350

Dear Madame Chair Warren, Vice Chair Wilborn, Ranking Minority Member Corson, and Distinguished Committee Members,

Thank you for your time today to hear HB 2350. When I was campaigning last year, I met with Franklin County Sherriff, Jeff Richards. He explained to me that we have a loophole in our Kansas law. Currently we do not have a law against human smuggling in our state. This absolutely shocked me. He explained how Franklin County has I-35 going through it coming up from the border, and that humans are being smuggled in our state. He needs our legislative help to close this gap. He described how the Franklin County Sherriff's department has pulled vehicles over with people who are responsible for smuggling humans and when they bring them into the station, call I.C.E., I.C.E. doesn't come, and therefore they have to let these human smugglers go, as there is not a law in Kansas for them to do anything about it.

People often get confused on the difference of human smuggling and human trafficking. Human trafficking is against the persons will, and human smuggling is when the person is willing and often paying to be smuggled. The person hired to haul and drive these people is the smuggler, and the smuggler is often referred to as the "coyote or coyotes". These coyotes look at Kansas as an attractive state to set up shop, which has led to harboring of humans. Human smuggling is the gateway for people being smuggled to be taken advantage of with other types of trafficking, such as, labor, drug, and sex trafficking.

This is a known problem in our state and HB 2350 makes it so law enforcement and our Attorneys and Prosecutors can do their jobs.

The Representative from Ottawa and I have both been working on this together as we both have Franklin County in our Districts. However, human smuggling is not just a FRCO issue, this is an issue across the state of Kansas.

We have worked with the Sheriff's Department, Police Department, County Attorney, KTA Highway Patrol, KBI, Attorney General's Office, Homeland Security, the Associations of Police/Sheriffs/District Attorneys, Human Trafficking Boards, US Congressmen, etc., all of which are proponents for our bill.

This bill passed the House Committee on Corrections & Juvenile Justice with amendments, and then passed the House floor 117 – 4.

I appreciate your support for HB 2350 to stop human smuggling in Kansas.

In Service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie Barth".

Representative Carrie Barth, District 5

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