



Testimony for: House Committee on Children and Families, House Committee on Health & Human Services, House Committee on Corrections & Juvenile Justice, and House Committee on Federal & State Affairs

Topic: Human Trafficking in Kansas

Submitted by Kristy Childs, Executive Director

Member of Attorney General Derek Schmidt's Human Trafficking Advisory Board

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Chairs and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on the topic of Human Trafficking in Kansas. I am a survivor of Human Trafficking, before it was a recognized as the atrocity that it is today. I founded Veronica's Voice to help the women whose lives have been ravaged by this society ill more than eleven years ago and have been providing my own story and a reflection of what I see in the services we provide since that time.

Today I am sharing with you my personal story and the culmination of experiences of meeting more than 8,000 women and girls (and some men and boys), ranging in age from twelve to 60, who are being exploited in the commercial sex trade.

I propose to you that this issue must be addressed from a variety of ways. However, the most overlooked solution is to address the demand side of commercial sexual exploitation/prostitution/sex trafficking and I believe it is the most productive place for the legislature to focus. It is important to note that when I speak in terms of legislation for demand reduction there is a distinct difference between those who are knowingly purchasing from minors and those who are purchasing from adults. We advocate for a zero tolerance of the purchase of anyone for sex.

I will share some ways to address the demand:

- Legislation that mandates convicted offenders to pay substantial fines and penalties that go back into services for this specific population.
- Restorative Justice through certified offender's programs (i.e. John schools)
- Repeated offenders registering on a sex offender registry
- Because this population is targeted by violent offenders, we would recommend that DNA be collected on all individuals arrested for sex crimes.
- We would recommend the legislature review the Swedish laws. They have adopted the approach of decriminalization for the victims with criminal focus on the buyers.

Veronica's Voice has such a strong commitment to the issue of demand reduction that on April 13th we are hosting the regions first conference to begin to address this as a community. Those who are interested can learn more at www.demandchangeheartland.org.

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