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### **Testimony in Support of SB 61**

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### **House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee**

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1:30 PM

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Catholic Conference strongly supports efforts to eliminate the disgraceful, repugnant practice of human trafficking.

It has been estimated that as many as 17,000 people are trafficked into the United States annually, and the number of persons trafficked globally could reach into the millions. Most Americans would never imagine that there are people in their midst who are living as modern day slaves, but this is in fact so.

The Second Vatican Council declared in 1965 that slavery, prostitution, and the selling of women and children are “infamies” that “poison human society.” In 2002, Pope John Paul II wrote that “the trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offense against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights,” and that “the sexual exploitation of women and children is a particularly repugnant aspect of this trade, and must be recognized as an intrinsic violation of human dignity and human rights.”

We support the Legislature and the Attorney General in their efforts to fight human trafficking and we appreciate the fact that the interested parties in Kansas appear to be approaching the issue in a fashion free of partisan politics. Unfortunately, that is not always the case, even with an issue as important as this, where seemingly all would be in agreement. From 2006-2011, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) held a federal contract to provide services to survivors of trafficking. The USCCB assisted over 3,000 trafficking survivors during that time, including 350 children. Despite the fact that the USCCB had significantly higher effectiveness scores than other grant competitors, the Obama Administration canceled the USCCB contract in 2011 because the USCCB would not provide or refer for abortions, sterilizations, and artificial birth control in their anti-trafficking program.

We hope that efforts in Kansas to fight the scourge of human trafficking do not take such a politicized turn, and we thank the committee for its attention to this extremely important issue.

MOST REVEREND MICHAEL O. JACKELS, S.T.D.  
DIOCESE OF WICHITA

MOST REVEREND JOSEPH F. NAUMANN, D.D.  
*Chairman of Board*  
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