

2/2/2021

SB56

Senate Judiciary Committee

I am Dr. Sharon Sullivan. Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of SB56, mandatory posting of the National Human Trafficking hotline. I'm here as a representative of the Topeka Shawnee County Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition.

Posting the National Human Trafficking hotline is a very easy way to help those who are being victimized and, ultimately, reduce human trafficking in our state. The cost of the posters is already borne by the Attorney General's office, so all that is needed is legislation and commitment.

Prominent and uniform posting of the Human Trafficking hotline will do at least six things.

1. Consistent access to the Human Trafficking Hotline will make it easier for victimized people to get help. The information will be available in the majority of places they go so they have multiple opportunities to utilize the information.
2. It will raise awareness that Human trafficking is real and it's happening here in Kansas. I've been providing human trafficking education in Kansas for fifteen years. Yet I am continually asked, "But that doesn't happen here, right?"
3. Awareness often results in increased identification of human trafficked people. When citizens call the hotline, they are helping someone who may not be able to ask for help for themselves. Good Samaritans make a difference.
4. When our communities realize that Human Trafficking is here, they understand the critical importance of investing in prevention strategies, which reduces vulnerabilities to exploitation and abuse.
5. The human trafficking hotline makes visible the victimized people among us. It encourages our communities to increase resources and support to victim service agencies.
6. Finally, prominent and uniform posting of the Human Trafficking hotline serves notice to perpetrators and exploiters that victimization is not a Kansas value. "We take this crime seriously and you are not welcome here."

Thank you for your time.

Dr. Sharon L. Sullivan