

**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF KANSAS
Michael F. Kagay, District Attorney**



January 29, 2025

TO: Chairwoman Warren of the Senate Judiciary Committee
FROM: Mike Kagay, District Attorney for Shawnee County
RE: Proponent Testimony for SB 71

Chairwoman Warren and Members of Committee:

I serve as the Shawnee County District Attorney, and as a member of the KCDAA board. I am offering my strongest possible support for SB 71, and hope that you give it favorable treatment. Kansas has a proud and historic legacy of standing against oppression and exploitation. As a Free State, Kansas was born out of the fight against slavery, a struggle that defined our identity and set a standard for moral leadership. Today, we face a modern form of slavery—human trafficking. Traffickers continue to prey upon the vulnerable, treating human beings as commodities to be bought and sold. This dark reality is a stark reminder that our fight for freedom is not over.

In 2018, the Kansas Legislature declared war on human trafficking, recognizing the pervasive harm it causes and committing to combat this crime with every available resource. That declaration reflected our state's deep-seated belief in the dignity of every person and our responsibility to protect the most vulnerable.

However, declarations alone are not enough. We must follow through with concrete actions that strike at the heart of this issue. That is why, in 2021, I first proposed this legislation to address the demand side of the sex marketplace. The marketplace where these crimes occur is fueled by buyers, whose actions create the daily indignities and abuses suffered by victims in our communities. We must hold them accountable, because it is within our power—and our moral obligation—to stop this cycle of exploitation.

The suffering caused by human trafficking is not abstract. It happens every single day in our neighborhoods and communities. Victims endure trauma, abuse, and dehumanization while their traffickers and buyers profit from their pain. We cannot turn a blind eye to this injustice. By supporting SB 71, you have the power to make a real and lasting difference. Strengthening penalties for sex buyers and implementing standardized education programs will not only deter future crimes but also reduce recidivism by confronting buyers with the truth about the suffering they perpetuate. This legislation empowers us to take meaningful steps toward a future where human trafficking has no place in Kansas.

We are Kansans. Our history reminds us of the power of collective action in the face of injustice. Today, we stand at a critical juncture in the fight against modern slavery. Passing SB 71 is not just the right thing to do—it is our responsibility.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge the committee to pass this vital legislation. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.