

Proponent SB 71
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Judiciary Committee

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Senators,
Thank you for your attention to this issue.

If prostitution was a victimless crime, force, fraud and/or coercion would not be necessary to get people to enter the commercial sex industry.

After all, how many people want to have sex with 10-25 strange men every day? Who wants to get beaten if they refuse a specific sex act? Who wants to be tortured because a stranger wants to replicate something they saw in violent pornography?

Make no mistake, prostituted people experience great harm from both the buyer and the trafficker.

Human trafficking is a crime of greed. If there is no money, traffickers will find another way to make money. It's a basic business model. No demand, no need to create a supply.

Statistically, and historically, the sex buyer is the only person who always has a choice in the commercial sex transaction.

We must hold buyers accountable if we want to reduce sex trafficking.

Senator Brenda Dietrich, in collaboration with the Shawnee County DA's office, the Attorney General's Office, and Rotary Clubs across Kansas, has proposed SB 71 to increase the penalty for purchasing sex from a class A misdemeanor to a level 9 felony, with the goal of reducing the demand for commercial sex. We hope a similar bill will be heard by the House judiciary, as well.

We know that most people in prostitution are trapped due to "force, fraud or coercion," the legal definition of sex trafficking. They are under the control of another person and do not have the freedom to refuse sex or leave the situation. They simply have no choice.

When we increase the penalties for purchasing sex, we decrease the demand for commercial sex. Studies show approximately 75% of sex buyers are "convenience" or "occasional" buyers.

Sex buyers are overwhelmingly male. The majority are middle and upper class married men with power and privilege in their communities. A 2012 study found sex buyers earned an

average of \$141,000/year; almost 80% have a college degree or graduate degree; ages ranged from 22-79; and nearly 85% are Caucasian.

When we make the penalties high enough, those men won't want to risk a felony.

When Texas made buying sex a felony in 2021, sex buyers clearly recognized the threat. On their prostitution message boards, they consistently opine "no more fun" in Texas because they couldn't risk a felony and therefore, their job.

Clearly, the legislation is working to deter sex buying in Texas.

An important part of this new legislation is sex buyer education diversion. It takes time to help buyers understand the harm buying sex does to the people whose bodies they're buying, and to their families and to their communities.

Please pass SB 71. It's time we hold sex buyers accountable for the harm they create.

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