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BRAD BARRETT
76TH DISTRICT

January 26, 2025

Dear Esteemed Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 71, which seeks to reclassify the act of purchasing sexual relations from a class A misdemeanor to a level 9 person felony. This legislative change is not only a necessary legal adjustment but also a crucial moral imperative.

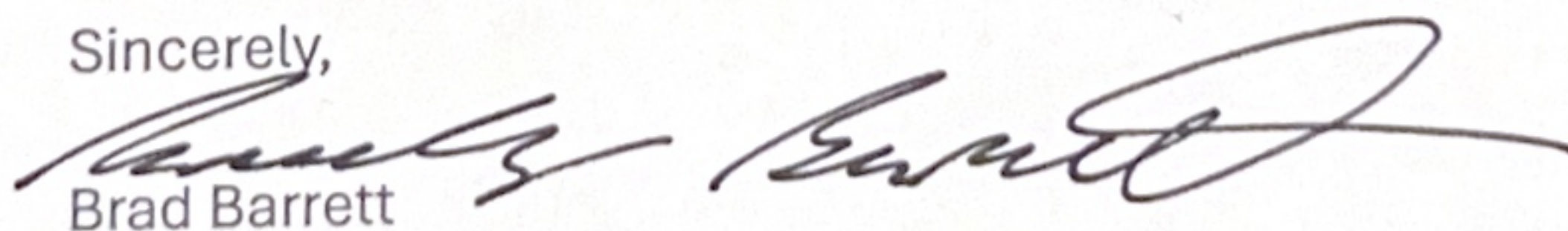
Like many of you, being a legislator is just one of the many roles I fulfill. I also have the honor of serving as a special investigator for the Shawnee County Attorney's Office. In this role, I have conducted numerous investigations into human trafficking within our community. These experiences have given me a firsthand understanding of the pervasive and insidious nature of this crime.

It is a harrowing reality that a significant proportion of individuals involved in prostitution are victims of trafficking. Locally, in the greater Topeka area, my investigations have uncovered that nearly every woman I have interviewed or researched has faced sexual abuse as a minor or young adult, regardless of their current situation. This consistent history of trauma highlights the vulnerability that traffickers exploit. Additionally, the abuses suffered by individuals in prostitution are both severe and widespread. Research indicates that 82% of those in prostitution have been battered, and 83% have been threatened with a weapon. These statistics are not merely figures; they represent real individuals enduring unimaginable suffering.

Evidence from other jurisdictions highlights the effectiveness of strict penalties in deterring the demand for commercial sex. For instance, after implementing a felony charge for purchasing sexual services in Texas, intel gathered from illicit online forums revealed a significant fear among potential buyers, many of whom stated that it wasn't worth the risk. This correlation between increased penalties and decreased demand serves as a compelling argument for the proposed reclassification in Kansas.

In conclusion, raising the penalty for purchasing sexual relations to a level 9 person felony is a vital measure in our fight against human trafficking and the broader exploitation of vulnerable individuals. I urge you to support this bill and affirm our commitment to justice and human dignity.

Sincerely,


Brad Barrett