



Kansas Bureau of Investigation

Kirk Thompson
Director

Derek Schmidt
Attorney General

Testimony of Kyle Smith, Deputy Director
Kansas Bureau of Investigation
In support of SB 61
Before the Senate Judiciary Committee
January 28, 2013

Chairman King and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of KBI Director Kirk Thompson and the men and women of the KBI, I appear today in strong support of SB 61. Unfortunately, human trafficking does exist in Kansas. Every day runaway children are exploited and manipulated by some of the most despicable criminals you can imagine. Foreign citizens, dreaming of a better life for themselves and their families, are brought here only to find the worst sort of nightmare. And somewhat uniquely, the victims in these cases have been convinced that law enforcement is to be feared and they refuse, at least initially, to cooperate. And even if we get a conviction, the punishment does not fit the crime and is totally inadequate to deter criminals from the profits available from this criminal activity.

We need a better way to deal with this horrible situation.

Fortunately, or perhaps unfortunately there are law enforcement officers, social workers, judges and prosecutors in Kansas with hands on experience in dealing with human trafficking. The Attorney General's Task Force on Human Trafficking has brought these forced experts together to craft improvements to all aspects of the problem.

SB 61 gives law enforcement the tools and procedures to better attack those that profit from the exploitation of our children. It appropriately treats those children who have been led or forced into a life of criminal activity by providing a way out, limiting the stigmatization and addressing the root problems. There are always compromises in any legislation due to differing priorities and limited resources. But, SB 61 is a major improvement in how we deal with these victims and punish the perpetrators. On behalf of the KBI I urge your consideration and passage of this bill.

I would be happy to stand for questions.