



OFFICE OF JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



March 6, 2019

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: John Shively, Coordinator of the Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation,
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth

RE: SB 150 – Enacting housing protections for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault,
human trafficking or stalking

Chairman Wilborn and Members of the Committee,

The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Community is a member of the U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) and a sponsor of the Stop Trafficking! Newsletter. Additionally, we have a committee of Sisters and a lay-woman in the community who specifically focus on education and advocacy on human trafficking issues.

Driving our commitment to this issue is our belief in the inherent and immeasurable dignity and worth of every person, made in the image and likeness of God. This is also the language of human rights advocates around the world, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that “the inherent dignity...of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.”¹

Sadly, survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are often denied human dignity not just in the initial acts perpetrated against them, but systemically as they attempt to navigate healing and repairing their lives.

¹ [Universal Declaration of Human Rights , 1948](#)

This is why we support SB 150, as it seeks to provide necessary protections and recognizes that it is unjust to deny those who have been victimized, at no fault of their own, access to safe housing.

Domestic violence creates a great unmet need for shelter. According to a 2005 report by the U.S. Department of Justice, one in four homeless women is a domestic violence survivor.² Additional studies show that grantees receiving funds from the federal government for domestic violence services reported 196,467 unmet requests for shelter.³ Not only does this create an immediate housing concern for the survivor, but it also creates vulnerability for further exploitation. One survivor survey indicates that 64 percent of human trafficking survivors reported being homeless or experiencing unstable housing at the time they were recruited into trafficking situations.⁴

Rules similar to those in SB 150 already exist for federal housing. Based on the information I was able to find, 33 states have provisions that protect survivors of domestic violence in housing, many of which contain similar provisions.⁵ We support passage of SB 150 because it seeks to protect the human dignity of survivors and works to protect them from further harm or unjust treatment.

² [J.L. Jasinski et al., The Experience of Violence in the Lives of Homeless Women: A Research Report, Nat'l Inst. of Justice, U.S. Dep't of Just. \(2005\).](#)

³ https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/fvpsa_state_tribal_20150731.pdf

⁴ <https://polarisproject.org/sites/default/files/A%20Roadmap%20for%20Systems%20and%20Industries%20to%20Prevent%20and%20Disrupt%20Human%20Trafficking%20-%20Housing%20and%20Homelessness%20Systems.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/state-laws-protecting-tenants-in-domestic-violence-situations.html>