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Neutral Testimony on Senate Bill 531

Presented to the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

By Jennifer Montgomery, Chair of the Human Trafficking Advisory Board

March 15, 2022

Chair Hilderbrand and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide neutral testimony for SB 531. My name is Jennifer Montgomery and I am the Director of Human Trafficking Education and Outreach and serve as Chair of the Kansas Human Trafficking Advisory Board for Attorney General Derek Schmidt.

The Kansas Human Trafficking Advisory Board (HTAB) explores the issues of human trafficking in the state of Kansas. This team of advisors is composed of law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, court personnel, advocates, survivors of human trafficking and other pertinent parties who have expertise in this field.

Of particular concern is the gap in enforcement in this bill. Section 13 preempts local governments from establishing professional licensing requirements for massage therapists operating in their jurisdictions, effective July 1, 2022. Several Kansas municipalities currently have robust local ordinances in effect or in progress. The state level enforcement provisions for persons not licensed or who have had their licenses suspended or revoked put forth in Section 7 (b) (1) of this bill, do not become effective until September 1, 2024. This would cause a gap of more than two years with no regulatory enforcement.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information with the Committee.

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