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**Testimony in Support of House Resolution 6038**  
**Presented to the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs**  
**By Attorney General Derek Schmidt**

**March 10, 2016**

Madam Chairwoman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Resolution 6038.

Three years ago, the Legislature adopted comprehensive reform to our state laws against the scourge of human trafficking. You toughened penalties, established support for victims, and made numerous other changes that are making a real difference in the lives of trafficking victims, particularly children. We have seen prosecutions under the criminal provisions of the new law, and we are providing support to victims. To put into perspective the difference you have made, consider just one fact: In 2009, the various grantees of the Office of the Attorney General reported providing services to two victims of human trafficking; in fiscal year 2015, our grantees reported serving more than 420 trafficking victims.

We are working to improve awareness, and awareness leads to intervention, support and, in appropriate cases, prosecution.

House Resolution 6038 recognizes the prevalence of this crime worldwide, across the country and right here in Kansas. More than 80 percent of human trafficking involves domestic victims, and the majority of these are children. That means most trafficking in Kansas involves local children. They may be lured, forced or coerced into sex or labor exploitation. The U.S. Justice Department has identified Kansas as an originating state for human trafficking.

Our office remains committed to efforts to thwart criminal activity, hold accountable both traffickers and buyers, and provide victim support. We partner with federal law enforcement agencies, national anti-trafficking organizations, victim service agencies across Kansas and other state agencies and community groups in efforts to achieve these goals. We are focused on the critical needs of addressing the problem in Kansas.

Madam Chairwoman, thank you for your consideration. I commend Representative Barton and other members of the House for their continued efforts on this issue. Awareness is an important part of combating human trafficking. The public can assist by reporting suspicious activity to the national hotline at 888-3737-888 or to local law enforcement in an emergency situation. The watchful eyes of Kansas citizens can help protect those who are vulnerable from this crime against human dignity.

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