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Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 371

Presented to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary

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Director, Human Trafficking Education and Outreach
Co-Chair, Human Trafficking Advisory Board**

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Chairman Wilborn and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony in support of Senate Bill 371.

The attorney general's office is home of the Human Trafficking Advisory Board (HTAB) which was established in January 2010 to explore the issues of human trafficking in the state of Kansas. In 2013, the Kansas Legislature recognized the Board as the state's official Human Trafficking Advisory Board. This team of advisers is composed of law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, court personnel, advocates, survivors of human trafficking and other pertinent parties who have expertise in this field. Senate Bill 371 was introduced as a direct result of recommendations from the HTAB at our last quarterly meeting in December.

Senate Bill 371 would require posting in certain businesses of signs approved by the attorney general that includes information on human trafficking, especially the phone number for the National Human Trafficking Hotline. Current law encourages businesses to post this information; passage of Senate Bill 371 would make this posting mandatory.

Human Trafficking has been reported in all 50 states. Both sex trafficking and labor trafficking exist in both rural and urban areas of our state. The National Human Trafficking Hotline keeps data each year on how many calls it receives from each state. In 2018, the last full year data available, the hotline received 269 calls originating from Kansas. These calls referred to both sex and labor trafficking and included tips from the public as well as calls from victims of trafficking. During the first six months of 2019, 110 calls were made from Kansas. The full year's data is still being compiled.

Since the hotline's inception in 2007, more than 246,000 contacts have been made nationally via telephone and text. When tips are reported to the hotline, in many cases they are routed to the

KBI and other state and federal law enforcement agencies across the state for appropriate follow up.

Posting this hotline number is important because it not only provides tips to law enforcement, it also connects victims and survivors of sex and labor trafficking with services and support to get help and stay safe. Our office has provided posters with this information free of charge to anyone who requests them, including businesses and convenience stores, and has regularly mailed them out to all state licensed health care facilities and state-owned rest stops across the state. Posting the hotline in a public place allows potential victims to know how to get help and allows members of the public to know where to report potential human trafficking. Hotline advocates speak English and Spanish and can communicate with callers in more than 200 additional languages using a 24-hour interpreting service. The HTAB recommends that posting of the hotline be required in certain business and public places, much like Missouri, Maryland, Arkansas and many other states. Our office currently has posters available for this purpose which are free of charge and can be accessed on our website for download and printing.

Thank you for your attention to these matters, and we encourage your adoption of this bill, as recommended by the Human Trafficking Advisory Board.

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