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**Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee
In Support of SB71
March 3, 2025**

Chair Humphries and Committee Members:

Our associations support SB71. The vast majority of the crimes of buying sexual relations are further victimizing persons who are being sexually trafficked. These crimes also expose the human trafficking victims to a high risk of other violent crimes imposed on those who purport to be a sex customer only to commit violence against the victim. Buying sex is not a victimless crime.

Making the first offense a felony, along with the additional requirements of persons convicted of the crime, will result in several advantages. The buyers of sexual relations are as much responsible for the human trafficking of the selling party as those actively engaging in the trafficking. If there were no buyers there would be no market for the sex traffickers to commit their heinous crimes against their victims.

Making the crime a felony on first offense will also take these cases out of the Municipal Courts. The advantage to this is that when there are plea agreements, pending cases, or diversion agreements the record of those events will be readily available to every prosecutor in Kansas through the state court records. Currently, municipal violations are only recorded in a state system at time of arrest and time of conviction and that record will only be in the KBI files, not the court record system. Because of this, details of the case will not be in the state court system but scattered across the state in siloed municipal court systems and city prosecutor files. With the proposed changes, all steps taken in a case of buying sexual relations will be documented in the state court records system. This will lower the risk of a new case being prosecuted without the prosecutor's knowledge of other pending cases or previous cases without conviction of the charged crime, such as a plea bargain.

This is a reasonable step to take to further address the human sex trafficking problem.

We urge the Committee to move this bill forward.

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