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March 4, 2025

The Honorable Susan Humphries, Chairwoman
Judiciary Committee
Kansas House of Representatives
State Capitol
SW 8th &, SW Van Buren St,
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairwoman Humphries and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

As Kansas citizens extremely concerned about the harms caused by the sex trade in this state and nationwide, we write in support of [S.B. 71, Increasing the Criminal Penalties for Buying Sexual Relations](#), the subject of a Judiciary Committee hearing on Monday, March 3 at 3:30 PM.

Most importantly, S.B. 71 elevates the penalty for solicitation of commercial sexual exploitation to a felony offense. This rightly criminalizes those who solicit sex and perpetuate sexual exploitation, targeting those who create the demand for the sex trade. Although we often discuss ending sex trafficking, the focus is not on buyers, which leaves them to inflict unchecked harm. Prostitution is fraught with violence; those in the sex trade suffer lifetime physical, mental, and emotional trauma.

This bill establishes a diversion program for those who solicit sexual exploitation. Diversion programs play a crucial role. By educating individuals convicted of soliciting prostitution about the harms of commercial sexual exploitation—particularly its ties to trafficking and coercion—these programs help shift attitudes and reduce repeat offenses.

To date, four states have elevated the penalty for solicitation of prostituted persons to a felony. Texas, Montana, Oklahoma, and North Carolina. Oklahoma passed this measure in 2023 to combat a rise in sex tourism after Texas made solicitation a felony in 2021. This has led to a displacement of buyers into Kansas. This measure is a natural and practical step for Kansas to combat sex trafficking.

Please support S.B. 71 in the House Judiciary Committee. It's time to demonstrate that people in prostitution are victims of the sex trade, and those who try to buy them should rightly face higher punishment!

Sincerely,

10 Undersigned Kansas Citizens

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Topeka, KS

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