



Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas

House Children and Seniors Committee
February 6, 2014

Testimony on:

Human Trafficking

Presented by:

Anna Pilato

Deputy Secretary

Kansas Department for Children and Families

Testimony of:

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Topeka, Kansas

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Human trafficking

Chairman O'Brien, Vice-Chair Meigs, Ranking Member Wilson and Committee Members:

I am Anna Pilato, Deputy Secretary of the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF).

Kansas has a proud history of fighting for human rights. We are now engaged in a battle against human trafficking, which is no different than the scourge of slavery we fought more than 150 years ago. Governor Brownback became a leader in this effort as a U.S. Senator more than 13 years ago, when he collaborated with the late Sen. Paul Wellstone to enact the groundbreaking federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act. Governor Brownback has continued this work, calling on Kansans to lead the nation in research and legislation to combat human trafficking and make services available to human trafficking victims.

Last year, Governor Brownback and Attorney General Schmidt offered, and the Kansas Legislature approved, legislation that put Kansas at the forefront of this fight.

The new legislation established the Human Trafficking Advisory Board and Human Trafficking Victim Assistance Fund to help victims. It also provides training to law enforcement who come in contact with victims and perpetrators of this crime. Several DCF staff members sit on the Kansas Human Trafficking Advisory Board. We are grateful for the work accomplished by all the stakeholders who serve on the board. The work is not finished.

Specific to DCF, the act provides for the establishment of a rapid response team to assess safety, placement and treatment for child victims of human trafficking. Young victims of human trafficking exhibit many different needs. The rapid response team utilizes a research-based tool to assess appropriate treatment and placement options for these victims. DCF's division of Prevention and Protection Services works with child victims who have experienced many forms of abuse and neglect and stands ready to respond to these victims of human trafficking.

The rapid response team will work with law enforcement members when they identify a child reasonably believed to be a victim of human trafficking. A determination will be made for placement of the victim by law enforcement, taking into consideration the recommendation of the rapid response team. DCF strives to identify the least restrictive placement for children in the custody of the DCF Secretary.

DCF continues partnerships with community organizations across Kansas to strengthen prevention efforts, identify victims and provide community supports. Community collaboration will support these children so that they can go from being victims to being survivors.

DCF stands strong in its commitment to provide care and services for child victims of human trafficking that are most appropriate and effective.

Thank you, Chairman O'Brien, for the opportunity to be here today to talk to you about this important issue. I am happy to stand for questions.

**Anna Pilato, Deputy Secretary
Kansas Department for Children and Families**