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Judiciary Committee
October 23, 2015

[LR186]

The Committee on Judiciary met at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, October 23, 2015, in Room 1113 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on LR186. Senators present: Colby Coash, Vice Chairperson; Laura Ebke; Bob Krist; Adam Morfeld; Patty Pansing Brooks; and Matt Williams. Senators absent: Les Seiler, Chairperson; and Ernie Chambers.

SENATOR COASH: Okay, we're going to go ahead and get started. I know we have a couple senators that are on their way, but you're all here on time so we're going to get started. Just in case you didn't know, you're here for LR186. I'm Senator Coash. I'm Vice Chair of the Committee. Senator Seiler is not here, so I'm going to run the hearing today. A couple of housekeeping things--this is a resolution, it's an interim hearing, so there's no for and against any of these, anything. It's just testimony. We do have invited testimony today, so I'll be calling folks up in an order that I have here that was put together by Senator Morfeld. We'll use the light system. We're going to give every testifier an opportunity to talk for five minutes. But if there are questions from the committee we'll, of course, entertain those. Please turn off your cell phones, silence them. And if you testify, we'll ask you to spell your name for the record and fill out a testifier sheet, which is right back there, and we'll get those to the clerk so that a clear record can be made of the hearing. Let me introduce my colleagues that are here. On my far left is Senator Ebke from Crete. This is Ollie; he's our committee clerk. This is our legal counsel, Josh. And on my far right is Senator Williams. And with that, Senator Morfeld is also on the committee, he's going to introduce LR186. [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: Thank you, Senator Coash. Members of Judiciary Committee, my name is Adam Morfeld, and for the record, that's A-d-a-m M-o-r-f-e-l-d, representing the "Fighting" 46th Legislative District, here today to introduce LR186. I introduced LR186 to study available services for victims of human trafficking in Nebraska and to determine what services are still needed. The number of victims of human trafficking in Nebraska is difficult to determine, but we know that they exist and they need assistance. Following me today will be a variety of experts who will highlight national data, report results of a recent survey, make policy recommendations, and provide a view of the national outlook on this issue, service providers for both minors and

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adult victims, immigrants and the challenges they face, child advocacy, the Attorney General and, most importantly, the personal testimony of survivors. A binder of testimony recommendations have been delivered to all of you and I hope that you are able to take the time to read it. I want to thank Meghan Malik from the Omaha Women's Fund for her work in putting together the testifiers today with myself. I also want to thank the staff of the Judiciary Committee for their help, and the Attorney General's Office for recognizing that this issue needs attention and solutions for both law enforcement and service providers to better serve these victims. Finally, I would like to also thank the countless organizations, advocates, and survivors who fight each day to raise awareness and provide services. And with that, thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: All right. Thank you, Senator Morfeld. Okay. We've been joined by Senator Pansing Brooks from Lincoln and we're going to start with the first testifier. I have Crysta Price. You want to come on up. Welcome. [LR186]

CRYSTA PRICE: My name is Crysta Price; that's C-r-y-s-t-a P-r-i-c-e. I'm the codirector of the Human Trafficking Initiative at Creighton University. And the initiative is sponsored by the Sherwood Foundation and the Women's Fund of Omaha. I'm here to talk to you guys about human trafficking and what we're doing to better understand the issue. So human trafficking is an umbrella term for trafficking for sex, labor, and organs. While they all have exploitation in common, they work in completely different ways, different groups of vulnerable populations, different trafficking structures, and different solutions. Estimates are up to 35.8 million victims globally. These are just essentially educated guesses based on sketchy methodology. No one really knows the magnitude of the issue. Our focus thus far has been on sex trafficking and the estimates here are just as bad. The most commonly cited figure is that 300,000 American children are trafficked every year; however, this figure does not represent the number that are actually trafficked. It represents the number that are vulnerable to being trafficked. And the author of the study himself has stated that we shouldn't still be citing the figure since the data is from the '90s. But just because we do not have a reliable estimate of the total number of victims doesn't mean that the problem does not exist or that we can't do anything about it. We know that the United States is a top destination for international trafficking. We also know that unlike other modern western democracies, we also traffic our own victims. There have been 150 cases in 31 U.S. states of minors advertised on backpage.com and the Omaha Child Exploitation Task Force

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has prosecuted 42 cases in just five years. And that just represents the known victims. Based on the definition of sex trafficking, we know that this is just the tip of the iceberg. Any minors involved in prostitution are automatically victims of trafficking. The subset of adults in prostitution who are there as a result of force, fraud, or coercion, are also victims, whether they're Americans or foreigners. Many of the foreigners in prostitution are smuggled into the country, which often involves elements of force, fraud, and coercion. It's important to note that there's really no single dominant narrative to sex trafficking. Not only are foreign victims vulnerable to smugglers, but when they're here, traffickers take advantage of their cultural isolation, fear of law enforcement and service providers, and potential undocumented status that's leveraged due to their fear of deportation. The vulnerabilities of American victims tend to be rooted in poverty, family dysfunction, homelessness, and sexual abuse. Traffickers also commonly recruit from the middle class by feigning romantic interest in their potential victims. And although we know very little about trafficking of males, the LGBT community, and Native Americans, studies suggest that these groups are more vulnerable than conventional wisdom would have it. The human trafficking initiative that I'm a part of is working to identify these different narratives and incorporate them into a more systemic model of how trafficking works from an international to a local level. Our goal is to generate responsible data on the prevalence of the problem. So I'll conclude by briefly touching on some of what we've seen from one part of the project which analyzes data from [backpage.com](http:// backpage.com), a well-known commercial sex Web site. Ninety-two phone numbers advertised in [backpage](http:// backpage.com) have Nebraska area codes, many of which are advertised in other parts of the country. Non-Nebraska area codes are also advertised in our state. We're clearly part of a national system here. There are five Nebraska cities that have their own escort section on [backpage](http:// backpage.com): Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island, North Platte, and Scottsbluff. This summer there were on average 45 females advertised in the state on any given day; and of those, 81 percent were advertised in more than one city. So there's a lot of movement here. In the I-80 and I-29 corridors, they don't just facilitate movement across the state or through the state, but also to other parts of the country. While a majority of trafficking occurs in the region, there's a surprisingly large amount of traffic that we see from places as far as Seattle and Miami. There's also strong evidence that minors are advertised and sold in Nebraska. A study at UNL using very conservative estimation techniques concluded that 47 Nebraska high school girls are trafficked annually. On [backpage](http:// backpage.com), we estimate that about 8 to 10 percent of postings openly advertise minors. Anecdotally, we see significant variation in the advertised age of the same woman over

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time and across cities. For instance, a woman who is advertised in two neighboring states is 19 years old, was advertised in the Grand Island/Hastings area as 21. So in conclusion, we don't need to fall back on faulty estimates to know that this is an issue that affects our state. The human trafficking system is international in scope, affecting every corner of the U.S., urban and rural. Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you, Crysta. See if we have any questions from the committee. Senator Pansing Brooks. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: I do. Okay. I just...I've been to a human trafficking summit in New York so I...and that was human trafficking and the courts and it dealt more with law enforcement. Our Attorney General came and it was very helpful. I guess I keep hearing this discussion about not really sure about the number. Have people looked at the prostitution cases, because I don't know of many young girls who are just out turning tricks on their own? They're usually paying somebody. When you're paying somebody or doing something that goes to another person, to me that's trafficking. I mean it's like a drug dealer. Unless the girl was going out and really doing it on her own and making her own money, what percentage could possibly be doing that? Have we looked at that? I mean we look at prostitution and then we look at human trafficking like it's this big whole other world. And to me, I think that they interconnect perfectly. [LR186]

CRYSTA PRICE: Oh, certainly, when it comes to sex trafficking. So sex trafficking is prostitution where they are recruited, harbored, obtained through coercion, force, or fraud. Right? If you're a minor, under the age of 18, automatically, so there's no difference in that case between prostitution and sex trafficking. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Okay. [LR186]

CRYSTA PRICE: And one of the points that I tried to make here is that a lot of elements that naturally take place in prostitution require it to fall under the definition of trafficking. So, you know, a lot of pimps that are involved in this that use any sort of force, fraud, or coercion, which we know that that's often done, then that automatically falls under the definition. So I think that

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the focus in terms of the numbers is to try to identify what that subset is where it won't fall under the definition at all but...no. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Won't fall under the definition of trafficking because that person is doing it all by themselves? [LR186]

CRYSTA PRICE: Correct, yeah, if they don't have any element of force, fraud, or coercion. But what's interesting is that as you go on a case-by-case basis, it gets pretty hard to find that. It gets very hard to find that. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: That's what I'm saying. [LR186]

CRYSTA PRICE: Yeah. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: So I think we need to be looking at it more broadly. I just think everybody sort of looks at human trafficking and doesn't say, okay, prostitution, show me that you are doing this on your own, because otherwise I think other people are involved and that's trafficking. [LR186]

CRYSTA PRICE: Yeah. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Isn't that correct? Why aren't we looking at most prostitution as human trafficking, the sale of human flesh by other people and the purchase of human sex through a system? I just...I don't understand that really. It seems like it shouldn't be that hard to find numbers because we're looking at the big picture of human trafficking which we somehow have to get to the person that's selling them, whereas we know that these people are not doing it in their own little world. [LR186]

CRYSTA PRICE: Yeah. What's difficult is since it does have to fall under that definition, I think people are hesitant to just do a count of prostitution and say that that is automatically. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Well, I agree with you. [LR186]

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CRYSTA PRICE: But when people are studying the issue, they tend to study prostitution to see for trends and argue that since a large subset of that is trafficking, then the same trends hold. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: See, in a way, I think everybody is trying to study human trafficking and trying to pick out those one or two that they can prove it for sure, whereas you can study prostitution and human trafficking and take out the one or two that actually are not being trafficked or managed by another person to whom they have to pay everything, to whom they have to be responsible, to whom their lives are owed, and their room and board. So I just...I don't... [LR186]

CRYSTA PRICE: What's interesting though is that we actually do not have very good estimates of even prostitution. So even that, if we did have that number, right, we can work off of that. But a study commissioned on prostitution hasn't been done since around the '90s. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Okay. And I'm sorry to just throw this out. I know this is about social services. But any time this comes up, I just have to say that at that seminar and Attorney General Peterson and Assistant Attorney General Stephen O'Meara has been in agreement that we have got to stop this at the source, which is, you know, arresting the purchasers and the sellers of human flesh, so I just want to make sure. And, of course, we need to deal with the girls in the social service areas as well, but we have got to stop this like we've stopped and made a huge difference in drunk driving. We have got to as a nation give a hand slap on the first offense and then start moving in and embarrassing people into no longer treating young women this way ever again. Thank you. [LR186]

CRYSTA PRICE: Thank you. Yep. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you. Any other questions for Crysta? Seeing none, thanks for your testimony. Senator Krist from Omaha has joined us. Okay, we're going to bring up Meghan Malik next. Good afternoon. [LR186]

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MEGHAN MALIK: Good afternoon. My name is Meghan Malik, M-e-g-h-a-n M-a-l-i-k, and I am the trafficking response coordinator with the Women's Fund of Omaha. The Women's Fund celebrated its 25th anniversary this year of identifying critical issues through research, funding innovative solutions, and leading dynamic change to improve the lives of women and girls. This year the Women's Fund partnered with local funders to look at how we can best impact the issue of sex trafficking by providing responsible research, public awareness, and partnerships to develop and expand services for victims and survivors. We are working closely with numerous partners, including the Nebraska Attorney General's Office. In August we developed an on-line survey tool with the assistance of many members of the Attorney General's human trafficking services work group. The survey served as an environmental scan of the services and capacity needs for victims and survivors of human trafficking. In the front of your research binder that you received today--it looks like this--you have the full survey. The survey was distributed to service providers, law enforcement, educators, medical, county, state, and federal officials. We had 677 respondents from all counties and four indigenous nations, with nearly half coming from the nonprofit sector. The survey revealed that while the majority of respondents believe trafficking is a problem in their community, 76 percent do not provide services for survivors and most have no plans to provide those services. Currently, a majority of service providers are underequipped to respond to victims of trafficking and do not have the tools they need to identify victims. Over 70 percent do not screen for indicators of trafficking and do not track identified victims of trafficking. But most do want training on identifying and assisting victims of trafficking. Most alarming was that of those who do have the capacity to respond to victims of trafficking, 84 percent do not believe that they are adequately meeting the needs of the victims. Respondents clearly said that this is a population with many high needs; and across all of the sectors the top three needs of the victims identified by respondents were the same, and those included mental health, emergency shelter, and crisis intervention. Despite respondents' recognition of victims' needs, there is a disparity between services victims need and the services that Nebraska agencies provide. For each service identified as a top need, fewer than 30 percent of providers can adequately meet victim needs. Because of this disparity, victims have extremely limited avenues to access the services they need. Adequate service provision is also complicated by barriers experienced by trafficking victims that limit their ability or willingness to access services. Once again, the barriers reported by respondents were consistent across all of the sectors. They included no knowledge of available services, lack of trust in the system, and shame

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or embarrassment. There are serious negative implications for the well-being of victims and survivors as a result of underidentification, insufficient service provision, numerous barriers to service receipt, and a limited institutional capacity to respond to victims' needs. Simply: Victims are not being identified and are not getting the services that they need. While this illustrates the stark reality of the gaps we have in our state to meet the needs of the victims and survivors of this crime, private providers, law enforcement, and government are beginning to come to the table collectively to address these issues, but there is much work to be done and resource allocation will be necessary. We recommend the next step be to focus on enhancing, developing, and implementing trauma-informed services for victims and survivors, for minors and adults in Nebraska. We need to ensure access to an array of specialized services, including housing, and also provide real opportunities out of the commercial sex industry to ensure economic security. This will take a partnership, commitment, and funding from not only the private sector but also the Legislature. While nationally there are no best practices or evidence-based models for service provisions of victims of human trafficking and many states are struggling, we must do better. We need to look at promising models in states that have longevity around the issue, like Minnesota, Florida, Tennessee, New York, and Illinois. These states offer a continuum of service, not a one-size-fits-all model, and they have collaboration between services and law enforcement. We need to use this opportunity to develop something that is right for our state and that could potentially be used as a model for other states. We would anticipate a partnership from the Legislature in the development of these services and funding to support these services. Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you. Do you envision a different model of service for adult victims than children victims? [LR186]

MEGHAN MALIK: Yeah. I think it's going to be necessary to have a comprehensive array of services. But there will need to be some different response systems. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions for Meghan? Senator Krist. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Hi, Meghan. [LR186]

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MEGHAN MALIK: Hi. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Thanks for coming. You as part...in your function of the Women's Fund in Omaha have reached out or have touched and probably know most of the service providers in this area? [LR186]

MEGHAN MALIK: Yeah. We've been working collaboratively with a number of them. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Okay. So in order of expertise, how would The Salvation Army fit into the service providers? Do they have experience in the area? Have they been doing it for very long? [LR186]

MEGHAN MALIK: Yeah, I mean, The Salvation Army Wellspring program, and you'll actually hear from the Salvation Army today, this afternoon, and so they'll be able to speak to that more, but they have years of experience and with their Wellspring program serving specifically adults who have been trafficked. But now with the influx of money from the new grant, that gives Nebraska certainly an opportunity to use those funds to be leveraged to really build capacity. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: So in our experience where we have a consortium of services--and I'm going to use NFC as an example in the Omaha area--there's a group of service providers that are brought together, that money is spent, and those services are provided with experts at the table. You spoke for a minute in answer to Senator Coash's question about the difference between a juvenile and an adult and how we would hopefully like to...at some point, there will be lack of criminalization in order for rehabilitation to exist. What is your suggestion when the manna falls from the federal government and The Salvation Army has to distribute? How would you hope that they would go forward with a consortium of service providers? [LR186]

MEGHAN MALIK: You know, I'm not going to speak to what service providers necessarily should be at the table. But I think what we have talked to them about is that the collaboration is going to be critical. When we went to D.C. to the summit for the court improvement project, and then you'll also hear from Shared Hope today who are national experts, I think one of the biggest

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things that we know is that one agency cannot do it all and that...I was at the human trafficking conference in Lincoln where academics from across the country and then even internationally came and I heard time and time again this is the hardest issue that they have ever worked on. And so we really...this is going to have to be a collaboration. Entities like NFC have to be at the table; entities like YES House who, you know, are providing services for homeless youth will have to be at the table. There's really going to be a piece for everybody that they're going to need to be a part of this. But, and I'll tell you, the resources, the funding that's coming in, while it's \$900,000 over three years, that's going to be a drop in the bucket. They'll certainly necessarily...we'll need more resources for services. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: I would agree. There's certainly more resources that need to be made available. And the accountability for the funds obviously from the federal grant will be strict and... [LR186]

MEGHAN MALIK: Yeah. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: But I guess in leading, I've used you as a sounding board in leading the question. I'd like to hear how that consortium is going to come together because one agency or one effort doesn't have all the answers, in my opinion. And our other experience with Health and Human Services in terms of, let's say, just the privatization effort that was botched across this state, as we know, that what works in one jurisdiction may not work in another; what services are available in the metropolitan area are sadly maybe nonexistent in Chadron. So those kinds of things need to be discussed as well if we're going to get a handle on it, because the highways and the byways and the interstate system crisscross the state, and that's where the trafficking has its roots, I would think. [LR186]

MEGHAN MALIK: Absolutely. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: So my son said I couldn't ask you any tough questions, so, hope that wasn't too tough. Thank you, Meghan. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Senator Morfeld. [LR186]

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SENATOR MORFELD: Thank you for coming today, Meghan, and your help in coordinating this. One question, you mentioned a few different states that are...currently have some robust kind of approaches, not proven yet but robust nonetheless: Tennessee, Illinois, New York. How much money have they allocated? Do you know? Or if not, you can get back to us but... [LR186]

MEGHAN MALIK: So I know that Minnesota, initially they requested I believe...and so Eliza, who is going to speak right after me, they will be able to give you these exact numbers. But Minnesota initially asked for I think \$13 million; I think they got \$3 million. The private sector I think then put in \$6 million. I'm going to look at Eliza. I'm probably saying half of this wrong. But it's significant amounts of money have been needed. And I think one of the things that probably I didn't say in my testimony that Stephen Patrick O'Meara and I have talked a lot about is that these are not short-term services. And so when I say real opportunities out of the commercial sex trade, that's going to be critical and that's going to mean helping, you know, individuals find economic security. And so that means long-term things which tend to cost more money. [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Seeing no more questions, thanks for your testimony today, very helpful. [LR186]

MEGHAN MALIK: Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Okay, I just...I'm sorry. I have one more question. Sorry. Sorry, Colby. You said that people were talking about it being the hardest issue ever worked on. So what are the areas that are...I mean I'm thinking of drug trafficking. That's a pretty tough area too. And is it just the comprehensive national/international nature of this and trying to...and, I mean, what are the key issues? Poverty? [LR186]

MEGHAN MALIK: Sure. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Could you speak to some... [LR186]

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MEGHAN MALIK: Well, so when you talk about drug trafficking, one of the things that we've seen is that drug traffickers have also started trafficking girls because their commodity is reusable and there is less risk. The other thing is you really need to have a joint response between the services and law enforcement and so, you know, looking at how do you make those pieces work together and then knowing what models work. You're going to hear from Shared Hope today and it's going to talk to the effect that every state is really dealing with this and struggling to know what are these best models. The other piece of it is that culturally we have a ways to go, and to your point of, you know, we from the Attorney General's services group, and we're looking at screening tools, we are looking at everybody that is participating in the sex trade as needing to be screened in because, to your point, it's likely that they could be being trafficked. But that is not a common belief among everybody. And so we have some education to do that prostitution is often not a choice and...but this state we've gone a long ways. We've decriminalized it for juveniles, and so that's a really positive step in the right direction. But we have just a ways to go on education within the state. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Because so many young girls just throw themselves out on the street without...okay. Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you. [LR186]

MEGHAN MALIK: Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Thank you for your work. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Okay. We're going to bring up Eliza and Christine, cotestifiers. We'll have you each state your name for the record and then if there are questions, we'll ask you to state your name before you answer it so that we know who is answering, or the transcribers will know. Welcome. [LR186]

ELIZA REOCK: Thank you. [LR186]

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CHRISTINE RAINO: Welcome. Thank you, Senator and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Christine Raino. I'm director of public policy at Shared Hope International. [LR186]

ELIZA REOCK: And I'm Eliza Reock, R-e-o-c-k, and I'm director of programs at Shared Hope International. [LR186]

CHRISTINE RAINO: And Raino is R-a-i-n-o. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you. [LR186]

CHRISTINE RAINO: So I'll start by giving kind of a brief background just about Shared Hope International. We are an anti-sex trafficking organization. Our policy work specifically focuses on domestic minor sex trafficking. We started out actually working internationally on sex trafficking overseas. But after working on a...being funded by the Department of State in 2006 to research global sex trafficking markets, we included the United States in that research and really got a picture of how extensive the problem of sex trafficking was here in the United States. And that led to further research funded by the Department of Justice that was eventually turned into the National Report on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking. And that research in turn led to the development of the Protected Innocence Challenge legislative framework which is what we use to grade states on the strength of their laws in combating child sex trafficking and responding to and providing protection for the child victims of this crime. And a very large portion of our framework looks at the protections for child victims. So it's really an honor and a privilege to be here today to be able to talk to you about our findings and research in this area. Determining how to connect sex trafficked youth with services has been a challenging task nationally, and this remains an emerging issue without simple answers. But as states take on the challenge of enacting and implementing laws that connect exploited youths with services, this contributes to the collective knowledge on this issue and promotes more and more effective service responses as states, agencies, service providers, and advocates learn from one another's experiences. The incredible value of this collective knowledge is what prompted us to write the JuST Response State System Mapping Report which has been submitted, or we have available to submit to the committee. And it looks at the successes and challenges of implementing a statutory protective

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response for juvenile sex trafficking victims in eight states. While no state has a perfect model and the differences in states' policy and resource landscapes caution against a model approach, there are key components of successful state models that are important considerations when developing a service response for juvenile sex trafficking victims. While increased understanding of the impact of trauma on juvenile victims has generated pressure to develop solutions, there is a lack of clear agreement on best practices in responding to this population, leaving states without clear guidance on how to develop a system that avoids retraumatization while addressing the unique needs of individual victims. This lack of guidance may prompt states to avoid developing a response until best practices are identified; however, a wait-and-see approach leaves the urgent and extensive needs of this victim population unaddressed. There are also common barriers to services which must be addressed to provide a comprehensive response. For example, agencies that regularly interact with juvenile sex trafficking victims are beginning to screen the youth they serve for possible commercial sexual exploitation. But even when victims are screened, staff may lack the training to accurately identify trafficking. Yet another barrier arises when victims are identified but appropriate services are not available, leaving overburdened state agencies with an impossible task of connecting a victim to services that do not exist or the multiple individuals in agencies working with this population are left to develop protocols in silos, resulting in victims touching multiple systems with no coordinated response. Each state is addressing the issues differently, some enacting laws to change their response to victims, while others have initiated nonstatutory protocols. Regardless, this response, which Shared Hope has termed a JuST--standing for juvenile sex trafficking--Response, recognizes this is a long and complex process. The JuST Response State System Mapping Report which we have submitted to the committee examines several states' responses and alignments to their policies and intends to inspire policymakers, advocates, and service providers across the nation to creativity and action. The two central themes of the report and the ongoing JuST Response project are to avoid retraumatization through the system response and to ensure that victims have access to comprehensive specialized services. In each of the eight states we assessed in the report, development of state protective response laws was an emerging area fraught with implementation challenges. Some states' statutory responses were built on earlier models with each state identifying an approach that works for that state and adapting it to its unique policy and resource landscape. By eliminating criminal liability under the prostitution law for juvenile sex trafficking victims, Nebraska has already accomplished one of the key components of a JuST

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Response. In addition, by mandating that juvenile victims be referred to an alternative agency, Nebraska recognized the need for a service response in conjunction with noncriminalization and we applaud Nebraska's leadership in recognizing these critical elements when enacting LB255 during the 2013 Session. However, as we all know, enacting a noncriminalization statute does not come without challenges. One common concern raised by advocates and states that have passed noncriminalization laws is that youth may still be charged with status offenses that mask the intent to arrest victims for prostitution and the reason that law enforcement resort to masking charges, as they're called, is the lack of appropriate protocols and services when encountering a juvenile sex trafficking victim at high risk of re-exploitation. I'd like to turn the microphone over to my colleague Eliza Reock. [LR186]

ELIZA REOCK: I'd like to echo Christine's appreciation to Senator Coash and the committee. We've kind of been a road show across the country after working on this report, not to come in and tell any state what to do, because certainly we don't understand the nuances in services each state can provide, but to help share what we've learned in other states. And I can tell you, having worked on this issue for ten years now, it's very refreshing to come in and be in front of a committee like this that's already so well versed on the issue and also understands those integral components of commercial sexual exploitation and how it relates to trafficking. Sometimes our testimony starts of saying let me explain to you why this is a victim and not a criminal, and that doesn't seem like the case. The reason Christine and I tend to testify together, as well as director of programs, I work specifically on the restoration piece. And I think it's important to note that while our policy, because of the complexity that has to do with agency response, looks at minors, from a restorative response, we look at adults as well. Looking at the implementation of some of the laws Christine already mentioned, the ability of child-serving agencies to adequately respond to the service needs of juvenile sex trafficking victims, particularly when the states lack statutory procedure to connect those youths to specialized services, is incredibly complex. And when specialized services are lacking, social workers face choosing between placement options that are unable to meet these complex needs or, even worse, faced with an option of returning that child to a re-exploitive situation. It's clear from Nebraska's recent surveys that we just heard about and were so impressive that the undertaking itself provides valuable insight to the rest of the country of what kind of resource crisis we're in. And there's a critical need for more structured and comprehensive service options for identified survivors of sex trafficking. To better

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understand the trauma needs of this population, we'd like to share with you a story of our good friend "T." "T" has survived sex trafficking, domestic minor sex trafficking here in this country. And I see we're close to time. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Can you give us the Cliff's Notes version of that story? [LR186]

ELIZA REOCK: Wrap it up? Yeah, absolutely. So she..."T" went through...by the age of 12, she'd been through five foster care families. And while we recognize foster care provides wonderful services, not every child is able to have that experience. And so as "T" puts it, she says: Foster care is where I learned that my value is associated to a paycheck and it's where I learned that I could be sexually abused as a child. So at 12 years old when I met my trafficker, he was the first person who ever told me he loved me. And so that's the kind of trauma bonding that we're talking about. More and more specifically, too, when we're looking at transnational gangs that allow this help and support of a family, that trauma bonding can be even more intense. And one of the things she expressed to us with the noncriminalization and the importance there is that every time she was arrested, especially as a minor, that just reinforced to her that the systems that were already failing her were going to do exactly what her pimp and trafficker told her were going to do: arrest her, make her a criminal and, therefore, reinforce her mistrust. So again, we just want to thank the committee so much for this important opportunity to continue the work. The federal grants that you've received, the opportunities that you've had with the laws you've already passed, I think you really have an opportunity to be a leader for the rest of the country and we'd love to come alongside you in any way we can to support that effort. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: All right. Thank you very much. Any questions for our two guests? Senator Krist. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Just a quick comment. We fought this. Senator McGill championed this years ago and Senator Coash and I remember some of that, and this past year the same thing. This criminalization effort requires services be available. It also requires that law enforcement and the legal profession understand that we need to be able to provide those services without incarcerating and it's a very fine line to walk. Again, last year we had the same fight. You have to criminalize them because you got to put them in jail because we can't hold them because we

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can't treat them because we can't, because we can't, because we can't. So it is going to be a team effort in order to get that. So very quickly, just tell me, how are other states...other states are dealing with this. Right? How are they dealing with it, and how do they hold and provide services without criminalizing and putting people in jail? [LR186]

ELIZA REOCK: Well, I'd be lying if I said we weren't building the plane as we're flying it when it comes to those kind of answers. And every state does look different. We don't know a perfect response; however, shifting away from criminalization has been a huge first step. I also think it's really worth mentioning, included in our submitted testimony, some of the federal laws that have recently been passed that are...especially the recent passage of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. We're going to see up to \$30 million of new resources, specifically domestic victims, that can be pulled down upon and that's actually, half of that money is no new taxpayer dollars. It's, in fact, coming from prosecution penalties associated for traffickers and buyers. So that's a huge accomplishment already that I think states are now revving up and becoming more poised to get those federal resources to serve not just international but domestic cases. Certainly the states that we highlight in the report, however, Minnesota with their regional navigator and having the statutes to support that, have been a huge component. At the same time, states like Kentucky, where we feel like they have some of the strongest laws and ability to respond, they're facing the problem--which I think the report you just saw was really important to highlight--where of the 130-some odd cases that were referred to the cabinet, because they didn't have the resources to provide the statutory regulated services there, only 7 cases were actually substantiated this year. So that's a very long way of saying, for your short answer, that there's a lot to learn. Nobody's quite got it perfect but certainly the states mentioned--Florida, Kentucky, Illinois, Minnesota, Washington State, others. [LR186]

CHRISTINE RAINO: And I just...if I could jump in, in terms of a few statutory examples--and this is Christine Raino--the...and those states that Eliza mentioned, there are some specific statutory approaches that we've seen that are designed to address that question. That question, I think it must come up in every state; it's definitely a broad debate and it's a challenging thing to answer. But some of the developments that we've seen are I think...kind of fall into two categories. One is looking at protective custody laws, so we've seen states amend their protective custody provisions to allow a minor who is being commercially sexually exploited, a child sex

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trafficking victim to be taken into custody by law enforcement and delivered to child welfare. We have also seen...another approach is kind of more along the lines of...well, it actually kind of goes hand in hand with that actually. It's assessment and assessment that really prompt...immediate assessment addresses, actually allows an opportunity to address some of the risk factors. So Florida, for example, they're...when they initially enacted a safe harbor law in 2012, they implemented it, encountered, you know, some challenges in the implementation, like any safe harbor because this is a long-term, complex process. And they came back two years later and with further legislation actually enacted a fairly comprehensive statutory assessment process that looked for the risk of possible recruitment, the risk of a child running from their placement, so that these could be considered and factored in when appropriate placements and services were (inaudible). [LR186]

ELIZA REOCK: And just one other piece that I think is important to mention for state examples, in Minnesota, also with the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act that was recently passed this year, there was a component called the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Amendment (sic-- Act) which was through Senator Klobuchar of Minnesota. And it's saying within the next three years every state needs to have a plan in place statutorily and agencywide of how they're going to direct youth away from a punitive response and into services. And if that isn't met in three years, there's the possibility of being dinged on your federal Byrne Grants. So really trying to look at what's happened, what's been done so far is, again, you all are ahead of the game to be ready not only to accept these federal grants, but to avoid some of the penalties that the SETT Act will bring. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: We had a discussion at the University of St. Thomas Law School a couple of weeks ago, a conference I was privileged enough to attend. And more importantly than being dinged on the federal funds, the ethics and the "cross state borders" issue came up. If Nebraska is the best, the best, okay, they're just going to circumvent and around the area and they're going to import. And so it is important that each state step forward and maybe not all look the same, but certainly there is no border when it comes to sex trafficking. Thank you, Chair. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: All right. Thank you. [LR186]

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ELIZA REOCK: Glad to know that's on the record. Yeah. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: All right, we'll take...oh, a question from Senator Pansing Brooks. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Yeah. Well, and along those same lines, at this conference they were talking about Georgia and how even though they don't have numbers of what they're doing, the FBI has stated that, in fact, traffickers are moving out of Georgia because the work that they've done is so significant that they're just avoiding Georgia. So let's get them to avoid Nebraska, let's get them to start avoiding, as you say, every state. And I just...I also want to say again, if we are not arresting and embarrassing--or whatever needs to be done--the purchasers and the sellers, then we aren't going to be able to do anything. And those, the girls, if they see themselves as the ones who are the criminals and the ones who have done terrible things, rather than the horrible people that are selling flesh and using these young girls' flesh for their pathetic enjoyment, I'm telling you--you can tell how angry I am about this issue--we have got to make a difference in this world. And this is something we can do. Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you, Senator. Thank you very much for your testimony. [LR186]

CHRISTINE RAINO: Thank you. [LR186]

ELIZA REOCK: Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Okay, so we're going to move into a string of service providers who are here to talk about what they are doing. We're going to start with Jamie Manzer. Come on up. Jamie is the director of SASA Crisis Center in Hastings. Welcome. [LR186]

JAMIE MANZER: Oh! There's a cell phone. Thank you for having me. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Welcome. [LR186]

JAMIE MANZER: (Exhibit 4) My name is Jamie Manzer, J-a-m-i-e M-a-n-z-e-r, and I'm currently the executive director for the SASA Crisis Center, which is Spouse Abuse Sexual

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Assault. We serve men, women, and children victims of sexual and domestic violence in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, and Webster Counties, otherwise known as "out west." I was asked to provide testimony today regarding what we're doing. But it's important to note that human trafficking is real and that my testimony dovetails with the two gals behind me because I actually was in Florida and was the human trafficking expert in Miami, Florida, tracking youth under the Safe Harbor Act. My job was to track runaway youth from the foster care system, the majority of whom were female, under 17, and entered a human trafficking ring in fewer than 48 hours after being on runaway from foster care. I personally tracked a 12-year-old girl from Miami, Florida, to Grand Island, Nebraska. We located her at a truck stop off of Exit 312, which is in my neighborhood. Reformed pimps discussed their desire in this case to move my girl quickly from Miami to Detroit and on to the Midwest because of the lucrative Midwest market, the low risk of arrest. Pimps discussed their sophisticated recruitment process and their efforts to network throughout the Midwest and to expand their "market" base. Victims were rescued describing...described going door to door, knocking on semis parked at truck stops to market their sex. My 12-year-old girl that we located in Grand Island was averaging six to ten commercial sex acts per day along the I-80 corridor. So far in 2015, my agency--SASA--has served 11 victims since January of human trafficking. Our service area has fewer than 50,000 people and we aren't even that close to I-80. None of these victims have felt safe enough to report to law enforcement. They haven't reported to any law enforcement agency but our service providers. They cite fear of arrest, reprisal for being prostitutes. They discuss the use of force, the gang rapes, the isolation, the way they were shipped around the state and the country from event to event. Three of our victims worked the Kearney Bike Night last year. One was taken to Sturgis. Another worked the (College) Baseball World Series in Omaha and another was pimped out during the State Fair this summer. Three of these victims were drugged, forced to participate in orgies, locked in drafty sheds during the Nebraska winter--which coming from Miami that's a big deal--and no food or water for days at a time. While law enforcement and my service providers work diligently, there is no coordinated response, per the testimony you've already heard. There is also a scarcity of services for these victims. Due to limited funding, when these services do exist, they're not enough and they're not successful. To trust us, victims need to know what we will do with their information, what will happen when they report to us and, most importantly, will I actually be safe. We need victims to report. So to your point, Senator Brooks, we need victims to report so that we can actually prosecute the pimps and the johns. Until we

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can get services in place to keep our victims safe, they won't report, we can't prosecute, and we can't end this problem. Unfortunately, many victims will return to their pimp because we can't guarantee safety or economic resources. To give you an idea of just how limited resources are in the United States, when I was working in Florida, there were 106 safe house beds for 3,600 victims that were confirmed that year, so 106 beds for 3,600 victims. My girl was lucky to get one of them. Why so few services for an epidemic? Countless churches, concerned citizens contact me on a daily basis and ask how they can help. But because of the nature of this crime, how dangerous it is, how complex, and how confidential it needs to be, regular citizens simply can't replicate the necessary services and, thus, the request for study, for information, and for funding. That said, beyond dollars for services, we need funding for awareness. Meghan Malik referenced it in her prior question and answer session. We need to be able to educate communities on this issue. To give you a little idea of what it's like outside of Lincoln, when I first moved to Nebraska in 2012, I brought up the issue of human trafficking and was told by a law enforcement officer and his patrol partner that though we were only 16 miles from where I personally rescued a 12-year-old girl, that we can't possibly have a problem here in Nebraska with trafficking because we aren't Mexico. And since then, I have personally served nearly 30 victims myself. In closing, the data you were presented earlier and my experience working with victims clearly illustrates the need to develop, fund, and implement more comprehensive services, housing, and awareness. Nebraska prides itself on having "the good life" but for far too many in our communities, both rural and urban, "the good life" is a distant hope rather than a reality. We must transform our reputation from being a destination state full of economic opportunity and market potential for pimps and johns and provide survivors of this terrible crime with an opportunity to truly live the Nebraska motto: the good life. Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you, Jamie. I have a quick question. The 11 victims that you served so far this year, were they Nebraska residents or were they victims who were trafficked here and then you caught them when...and intervened once they got here? [LR186]

JAMIE MANZER: That's a great question. Six of the 11 are domestic to Nebraska and 5 were brought in but they, to points made earlier, Senator Krist, were brought in from South Dakota, Iowa, and Colorado. So they're not far and the pimps and the johns are really taking good...or making good use of I-80 corridor. I think it's really important to recall from my testimony that of

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the 130 victims we tracked in my time as the human trafficking person in Miami, about half of them made it to Detroit by a train with their pimp and then were shuttled throughout the Midwest. You can imagine my shock and horror. I moved by driving from Florida to Nebraska; and when I got off Exit 312 to hit Hastings, I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the Dr. John's where we had found her. So, yeah, so it's really important to know it's very mobile, to your point from earlier, and a good, decent amount of them are from the community that I serve. That's scary because I always thought it was maybe people coming in. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Right, that's why I asked the question. [LR186]

JAMIE MANZER: Um-hum. Yeah, that's a great question. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you for the work that you're doing. [LR186]

JAMIE MANZER: Um-hum. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Seeing no questions, thanks, Jamie. [LR186]

JAMIE MANZER: Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Okay, we'll bring up Nikki Siegel from The Bay right here in Lincoln. Welcome. [LR186]

NICOLE SIEGEL: Thank you. Thank you for having me here today. My name is Nicole Siegel; last name is S-i-e-g-e-l. I am the director of the outreach services at The Bay here in Lincoln, Nebraska. The Bay is a drop-in center for youth. My job is to build relationships with homeless, sexually exploited, and at-risk youth and connect them with services in Nebraska. My position is made possible by funding from an organization called I've Got a Name that is committed to care for and support the affected youth by sex trafficking. I wanted to touch on a couple areas. The need for street outreach: Many kids who find themselves on the street or bouncing from place to place don't know what services are available to them or what places offer services for them and people even willing enough to help or care about their circumstance. I believe that there is a big

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need for (inaudible) outreach workers because there is a connection between the youth and the services. I believe there is also a need to be able to meet kids where they're at and the programs that are available to the youth are very reactive instead of preventative. I see the link between the people I serve who grew up in the child welfare system and end up homeless or sexually exploited. This seems to be because of the huge lack of aftercare programs and long-term support for the girls. My girls that I work with have often experienced severe trauma before, during, and after their experience in the child welfare system and are not usually able to or ready to lead a life that would be successful without continued services and support into adulthood. I would also like to talk about the services offered in Lincoln and Nebraska. While many services meet the needs of my clients, many services here in Lincoln don't often have...there are often long waiting lists due to the high need or the criteria to serve the youth is so specific that it does not always serve my youth. The hope is that this bill would recognize the long-term effects trafficking has on the survivors and implement services that protect our youth. Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you, Nikki. Thanks for the work you're doing here in Lincoln. Do you...so are you running into youth caught up in this? [LR186]

NICOLE SIEGEL: Um-hum. Yeah. I work primarily with homeless and at-risk youth and with that there is a lot of...there is not support and there is a lack of just community connections or even housing. So there is a lot of what they call couch surfing and then survival sex that happens. And my job is to connect them with services so they feel like they have more than that as an option and to just provide that long-term support for them. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Can you give me an example of the kind of services that you do try to connect them with, like who's out there providing housing to a trafficked...to somebody you might run into that's couch surfing and...I mean, who is going to put them up? [LR186]

NICOLE SIEGEL: Right. Sometimes we can get them into the Mission; if they have a dual diagnosis, we can get them into CenterPointe; if it's domestic violence that was recent, we could try to get them into, like, the Friendship Home, but it's very specific criteria that they need to

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have in order to get those housing opportunities. But then other than that, we have to look outside of our area to get those services for them. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Is reunification with family something that... [LR186]

NICOLE SIEGEL: The majority of the clients that I have served have been sexually exploited or pimped out by their family, so that's not really something that they can do. But when there is an opportunity, that's something that we always look for. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Okay. All right. Thank you. Senator Morfeld. [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: Thank you for coming and testifying today, and thank you for all your work at The Bay. Consistently, as I go to community forums and neighborhood association meetings throughout northeast Lincoln, The Bay is seen as being one of the...kind of the little beacons for teenage youth in particular. [LR186]

NICOLE SIEGEL: Right. [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: So thank you for all your work. Now I know you probably work with a lot of youth where you don't know sex trafficking is occurring or you may suspect, but how many cases of sex trafficking have you seen yourself? I mean if you can quantify that and even if it's an estimate. [LR186]

NICOLE SIEGEL: Right. I think last year that I connected with 125 youth and out of the youth that I served after time, after building relationships with them, they then come to tell me later that they have been exploited in the past so we get them services; or they have/are being exploited, and that was like 80 percent of all of the youth that I worked with. [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: The 125 that you worked with this last year? [LR186]

NICOLE SIEGEL: Yeah. There have been sexual exploitation in their past or currently, um-hum. [LR186]

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SENATOR MORFELD: Okay. Thank you. [LR186]

NICOLE SIEGEL: Yeah. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you, Senator Morfeld. Senator Pansing Brooks. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Yeah. Could you just clarify, because I heard it recently this year for the first time, could you just define survival sex just a little bit, because I thought that was pretty shockingly horrible. [LR186]

NICOLE SIEGEL: Right. Right. Well, I can...one client that I served, she was pimped out by her dad when she was younger at I think it was nine for him to get drugs, so at nine she realized that she can use her body as...it didn't have much value. And then she got taken out of the home into foster care system and ran away and came to realize that if she made friends, and especially with older guys, and she could exploit herself, she could stay there and have a place to stay instead of sleeping on the streets or under the bridge. So that's just a resource that they feel like they have is to exploit themselves in order to get food, diapers for their kids sometimes, housing, any of the resources like that. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Okay. Thank you, Senator. Thanks for your testimony today, appreciate it coming down. [LR186]

NICOLE SIEGEL: Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Okay, we're going to move on to Gretchen McGill. Welcome. [LR186]

GRETCHEN MCGILL: Good afternoon, Senator and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Gretchen McGill, G-r-e-t-c-h-e-n M-c-G-i-l-l. I'm an attorney with Justice for our Neighbors, a nonprofit organization that offers free immigration legal services. As a former prosecutor, my job is to work with immigrant victims of crime. While anyone can become a victim of trafficking, undocumented immigrants are highly vulnerable to being trafficked due to a combination of factors, including lack of legal status and protection, limited language skills

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and employment options, poverty and immigration-related debt, and social isolation. According to the National Human Trafficking Center's 2014 annual report, 68.1 percent of all trafficking victims are foreign nationals. Therefore, any serious comprehensive effort to combat trafficking must focus on serving immigrant victims. Connecting trafficking victims to immigration services is essential to helping these victims as well as stopping the traffickers. While some victims are forced to work in the sex trade, many others are forced to perform other types of labor, such as domestic servitude, factory or agricultural work. The labor trafficking is nothing more than a modern form of slavery. It is an extreme form of labor exploitation where men, women, and children are recruited and obtained and then forced to work against their will. Labor trafficking victims are often lured by false promises of decent jobs and better lives for themselves or their families. A 2014 study by the Urban Institute in Northeastern University found that 71 percent of labor trafficking victims enter the United States with legal visas. In some cases, however, these visas are used by the traffickers to keep their victims vulnerable to exploitation. My office worked on a case involving a man who was lured to the U.S. on an H2B visa, worked here in Nebraska. He was cheated out of his wages, forced to live in an apartment with dozens of men. He was exploited out of rent in the amount of \$400 a week to keep his job. When he complained about the conditions, his employer was able to abuse the legal process, get him fired, take away his status, and force the other men held at the apartment to remain quiet. These victims have very little resources to be able to escape or find help of any kind. In October of 2000, as part of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, Congress amended the Immigration and Nationality Act and created two unique types of visas. Their intent was to facilitate the reporting of these crimes to...by trafficked, exploited, and abused immigrants who are not in lawful status. The T visa is a visa available to victims of trafficking who are in the United States due to the trafficking. The U visa is a visa available to immigrants who have been victim of a qualifying crime. There are 27 qualifying crimes, including human trafficking, involuntary servitude, and peonage. Both the T and the U visa provide the victim with lawful status for four years, as well as work authorization. After three years, the victim is able to apply for their permanent residence. Certain family members can also apply as derivatives whether they reside in the U.S. undocumented or whether they're in a foreign country. A maximum of 10,000 U visas are allowed per year and there is currently 43,000 pending, so an average of four- to five-year wait. In comparison, there are...there's a maximum of 5,000 T visas available and there is only 567 applications pending. This figure reveals a dramatic underutilization of the T visa program given

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the enormous number of trafficking victims we have in the U.S. It demonstrates that victims are either not escaping the trafficking or they do not have access to counsel to assist them with the T visa process. It confirms the reason we are here today. We must raise public awareness regarding the broad scope of human trafficking and identify and remove barriers to delivery of services to victims. Labor trafficking is a crime that thrives on the isolation of its victims. In order to combat labor trafficking, we have to remove the factors that isolate these victims. One of those factors, and maybe the most important, is their immigration status, whether they have no status or whether their status is connected to the trafficker. Often, undocumented victims are only comfortable cooperating with law enforcement when they are not under threat of removal from the U.S. Both the T and the U visa provide legal status and takes away that fear. With increased cooperation of victims, investigators and prosecutors will be better able to secure the witnesses they need to prosecute the traffickers, thus, providing immigration legal services to victims' aid and ending this crime at the source: the traffickers. Thank you very much. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you, Gretchen. I just wanted to ask you about the story you told about the man who was forced into labor. So it sounds like you knew a lot about that story. [LR186]

GRETCHEN MCGILL: Yeah. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: What happened to that employer? [LR186]

GRETCHEN MCGILL: He was...the employer was investigated by the Department of Labor and the Department of Labor didn't pursue anything. The last we heard, Nebraska Legal Aid is working on creating a lawsuit where the victim would receive damages. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: It sounds like there were more than one victim though. [LR186]

GRETCHEN MCGILL: Yeah. Yes. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Okay. Any questions? Senator Pansing Brooks. [LR186]

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SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: It's my understanding that the T and U visa processes are sort of cumbersome. Is that correct? That's another part of the problem is that by the time somebody that's an undocumented immigrant might be swept up in some sort of arrest or something, that they...there's not enough time to get a lawyer, to get the visa and, I mean, the...I don't know. That's what some of the discussions were in New York at least, so. [LR186]

GRETCHEN MCGILL: I don't think the process is cumbersome if they have access to counsel. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Okay. Aha! Access to... [LR186]

GRETCHEN MCGILL: It's cumbersome if they don't report the crime because we have a lot of trafficking victims. We help sex trafficking victims, too, who don't want to report the crime and we still go through the T visa process, but it's extremely difficult if they didn't formally report the crime. But I don't think it's cumbersome at all if they have access to legal...experienced, high-quality immigration... [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: And how often do they get that? [LR186]

GRETCHEN MCGILL: Probably never. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Never, yeah, that's the problem. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you for being here today. [LR186]

GRETCHEN MCGILL: Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Okay, we'll go to Ivy Svoboda. Welcome. [LR186]

IVY SVOBODA: (Exhibits 5 and 6) Good afternoon. My name is Ivy Svoboda, I-v-y S-v-o-b-o-d-a. I am the executive director of the Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers. The Nebraska Alliance works alongside its member centers, Nebraska's seven fully accredited Child

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Advocacy Centers, to enhance our community's response to child abuse and neglect. Over the last ten years, the Nebraska Legislature has supported the Child Advocacy Centers and has taken action to ensure a coordinated response to child abuse investigations. In fact, last legislative session you granted the expansion of the centers to have nine satellite offices to ensure access for children, families, and investigators in rural Nebraska. And that's in one of the handouts; you can see the locations where we have developing centers and where we have our actual centers, developing satellites and our centers are located. The centers have been involved in the development of the Attorney General's statewide response plan and have been named as participating partners in this response, as in the same fashion we are named as participants in the child abuse investigations. The Department of Health and Human Services also outlined the use of Child Advocacy Centers in response to sex trafficking in their policy memo last summer. From the youth that come to the Child Advocacy Centers by law enforcement and Health and Human Services, we view the alleged victims of human trafficking as a special population. Therefore, we are in the process, the Child Advocacy Centers are in process of strengthening our expertise in this area through training from the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College. This training is fully funded by our...through our national partnerships and will be delivered in November, and then again for our forensic interviewers specifically in early 2016. We are also working with our local and regional FBI offices to train our forensic interviewers and advocates in this response. As you'll see in the statewide plan, training of professionals is one of the most urgent needs. Nationally, Child Advocacy Centers are an active player in the response to human trafficking cases. I also handed out another handout related to our...from our national body. National Children's Alliance has been championing the importance of Child Advocacy Centers as first responders for trafficking victims in Washington and worked closely with Congress to draft and pass the Juvenile (sic--Justice) for Victims of Trafficking Act, as was mentioned earlier. Additionally, the National Children's Alliance is collaborating with the FBI on the role that the centers play to assure that services are provided to victims and their family. National Children's Alliance recognizes that because children's...because Child Advocacy Centers play a key role in investigation and prosecution of the child abuse cases, as well as a key role in the healing of victims, we are uniquely equipped to be the first responders for victims of child sex trafficking. Recent research indicates that one of the major ways that officers reported compromised previous potential human trafficking investigations was through poor interviewing of the victims. In that same report, researchers noted that human trafficking victims who suffer

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from trauma may require multiple interviews before they can accurately discuss the victimization that they experienced, thus, the involvement of Child Advocacy Centers as first responders in child sex trafficking cases is critical. Though our centers are available 24/7, 365 days a year, as more cases are identified, the centers acknowledge that more resources would be needed to assure adequate staffing for interviews, medical advocacy, and the access to trauma-focused, evidence-supported mental health treatment. In summary, though, we ask that you support the efforts of Attorney General Peterson's Office and the statewide plan that's been developed. We believe this effort has been comprehensive and inclusive of the critical players and will result in good outcomes for victims of sex trafficking. This plan builds on the current resources you have supported and always allows for the expansion of protocols, training efforts, and services that directly impact the victims of sex trafficking in Nebraska. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you, Ivy. Senator Krist. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Thanks, Ivy, for coming, and for your testimony and for your work. I'm going back a few years and trying to collect my experiences and say this as politically correctly as I can. [LR186]

IVY SVOBODA: Okay. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: There are many attempts to make the world a better place to live in. There are many organizations out there that we have seen in the past dealing with children that are taking different approaches, some of them not...potentially without basis, without metrics, without support. And to throw money at a situation makes no sense unless the service providers that are out there are interviewing the correct way, doing the kinds of things in assessment and intake that they need to do. My fear, to be honest, and I'll let you comment to this, is that we don't need to reinvent the wheel. We need to look at those service providers that are out there and provide some evidence-based, active role that the state and the federal government money can be applied to so that we're doing the right thing the first time. It's all yours. [LR186]

IVY SVOBODA: I completely agree. That's why we're supporting the use of the Child Advocacy Center model for the victims of...the minor that are involved, and we've been voicing that

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through the statewide plan that's been created and the plan is addressing that and supporting that. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: And you're comfortable with that process and programs that we're looking at going forward in that way? [LR186]

IVY SVOBODA: Yes. And it's really important to us to see that...I mean there...as I mentioned, there might need to be training across the state. And we can...we are definitely proponents of training for the multidisciplinary team members, all the team members involved. We are a bridge to the service providers and law enforcement through the LB1184 teams, the multidisciplinary teams that you guys have supported that are in state statute. So we see us utilizing...that's one of our ways that we would definitely like to utilize that for minors in this area. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Well, your testimony means a lot to me. We go back a few years with the child advocacy issues and when I was on the Health and Human Services Committee and I appreciate that vote of confidence and it means a lot to me. It means a lot within, I'm sure, the committee members to know that we're moving the right way the first time. So thank you so much for coming. [LR186]

IVY SVOBODA: Um-hum, and it is definitely supported nationally, the 800 CACs across the nation, and that's something that, like I mentioned, yeah, that the partnerships that are occurring nationally are also...we already kind of have them locally, so that's very positive in Nebraska. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Good. Thank you. [LR186]

IVY SVOBODA: Yeah. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thanks, Ivy. Alice Drake from The Salvation Army. Welcome. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: Thank you. My name is Alice Drake; it's A-l-i-c-e D-r-a-k-e. And I'm very pleased to be here and represent The Salvation Army today. You've been hearing and learning a

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lot about the problem of human trafficking in our communities, our state, the nation, and all over the world. And of course, The Salvation Army, even though we are an international organization, we do not have all the answers either. We do know that we have received a grant in partnership with the Attorney General's Office and that is a \$1.5 million grant to be split between the two offices. We will be receiving \$900,000 of that for...to provide comprehensive services to victims or survivors of human trafficking. That really, when you break it down that that's for three years, \$300,000 doesn't buy much for a whole year across the whole state of Nebraska. Not only that, but this grant is for both labor and trafficking and we will be serving both minors and adults across the state. We have hired a statewide coordinator already, and we'll be hiring three more human trafficking victim/survivor specialists to be officed in various locations across the state. We know that every place looks different. Even though I am officed in Omaha, I also grew up in western Nebraska and I know that things look very different in western Nebraska than they do here. And we know that we need to get these specialists out in the various parts of the state and building those relationships with providers and seeing what needs to be done out there, who can do it, who has...who needs a little bit of help getting those started, who's talking to who, who's...just making all those connections because The Salvation Army doesn't pretend that we can provide all the services. We know that's not going to happen. But it is a community and a statewide problem, and we are working with other providers across the state. You've heard about the human trafficking task force that's been meeting in Omaha that has been meeting under the Attorney General's Office and has been being led by Stephen Patrick O'Meara. We anticipate that...we've been a part of that task force and meeting with that and we intend to continue because, again, that is part of the whole idea is to support the whole state. We also want to encourage our specialists to not only being responsible for connecting the survivor in their area, we'll be breaking the state up into three different areas, and to help them build...get resources for that individual that's been trafficked, building the relationship with them, and encouraging them to work with law enforcement to put the bad guys away. We know that's one of the hardest things because they often have maybe a bonding trauma with them or maybe there's some other things going on that they are resistant, they're afraid for their lives, afraid for their family's lives. There's all kinds of reasons why they don't necessarily trust law enforcement. But we really want to encourage them and make them feel safe. The Salvation Army has been helping people who have been employed as sex workers, whether by choice or whether, more often, by force and coercion, since the 1800s. In the last 20, 30 years, we've been providing individual counseling,

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support, providing transportation, helping women establish identities, because oftentimes the people that we serve, they don't have birth certificates, driver's license, they don't have any kind of ID. And so we work with them to get identification and help them establish their identity, find jobs, and get themselves so they can support themselves in the community, which has often been hard. Mostly we deal at this time with adults and often they have felony records from being arrested for prostitution. And so it can be quite a challenge to get them going, but we've had a number of great successes and getting them through college and getting them jobs and we're very happy about that. The thing is that when you're talking about human sex trafficking victims or survivors, it's not a problem that's easily solved, it's not quickly solved, and survivors often live for years with fear, guilt, and shame. Through The Salvation Army's Wellspring program, we know that the trauma, abuse, and atrocities the survivors experience is extensive. Many victims are also addicted to alcohol and various drugs, and many times this is how the pimps and abusers keep them in line and dependent. The survivors also learn that drugs and the alcohol help dim the pain and the shame that they feel. A major need that we see for survivors of sex trafficking and even labor trafficking will be substance abuse treatment and both crisis and long-term therapy. Other services we know will be needed across the state are: safe housing, which is a critical need in Nebraska; medical care; dental care; transportation; clothing; food; legal help, which is another big problem for us; establishing their identity. Many of these people who have been trafficked have gotten pregnant and have children, so we also need to make sure that we address the children that have...that may be in either their care or the pimp's care or the trafficker's care, and they need unwavering and constant support. In summary...yes. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you, Alice, for your... [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: Okay, thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: We'll see if we have any questions from the committee. Senator Krist. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: I want to make sure that for the record you understand I'm not second-guessing nor am I challenging the quality of work that Salvation Army does. [LR186]

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ALICE DRAKE: Yes. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: But within your testimony you've already told me that you're going to use that money to hire four people, one you've already hired. My suggestion is that if I look at the Child Advocacy Centers across the state, you have resident experts in North Platte, Scottsbluff, Gering, Grand Island, Lincoln, Kearney, Norfolk, and Omaha. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: Yes, we do. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: And that one coordinator potentially, and I mean I'm...this is...I don't want to get into this business. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: Um-hum. Right. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: But I'm suggesting to you that there's a limited amount of money and we have these experts, those experts, Jamie in Hastings. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: Oh. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: So when we structure the use of that money, I guess I'm going to be watching to make sure that we're not hiring more people and creating... [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: No. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: ...a second tier or reinventing the wheel. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: We intend to work very closely with the Child Advocacy Centers. But not everybody is a minor either, and so we also...and that's what the Child Advocacy Centers focus is on. So we have to have people who can connect not just if a child would go into foster care or have medical needs because of that trauma; we have to address adults and labor trafficking and the whole gamut. [LR186]

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SENATOR KRIST: So my point is just that there are not just...I used the example of Child Advocacy Centers. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: Yes. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Okay. My point is that there are experts all over this state. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: Yes. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: There are service providers all over the state. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: And that's what we're counting on. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Well, and my point I guess would be the less people we can hire and the more we can use the network that's in place, the more kids get services, the more adults get services, and we're not throwing money, like the federal government likes to do,... [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: I know. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: ...at overhead structure and admin. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: No. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Okay. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: What we're wanting to do is have people stationed in different parts of the state that can help meet law enforcement and help get services immediately and when we need somebody. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Okay. Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Senator Morfeld. [LR186]

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SENATOR MORFELD: So this grant that you received from the federal government, is it just to provide services to adults or children, too, or both? [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: It is...we will provide some services but most of the services will need to be provided by other people. [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: So these are coordinators that you'll be... [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: That's right. [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: Okay. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: It's coordinators. It's not that we will be providing the services so much... [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: Okay. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: ...but making sure that all the services are coordinated and seeing what still needs to be developed and then getting...seeing what we can do to get that developed. [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: And The Salvation Army's current program, Wellspring...is it called Wellspring? [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: Yes. [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: Does that provide services to children as well, or is that primarily adults? [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: At this time, it has been...for the last 30 years or more it has been strictly for adults. But we have been, even before this human trafficking grant we were already discussing about whether we should expand it to children also. [LR186]

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SENATOR MORFELD: Okay. And so who are you guys going to be working with to particularly get them up to speed on how to work with children victims of sex trafficking? [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: It's a small staff so all of us are licensed mental health providers. [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: Okay. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: And so we've all been doing and studying this for a long time and we're...I used to work in the child welfare system so I'm very... [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: Okay, so you're more than familiar. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: ...for a number of years so I'm very familiar with... [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: Great. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: ...exactly how the child welfare system works and have a lot of contacts and people that I need. [LR186]

SENATOR MORFELD: Fantastic. Good. Thank you for your work. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: You're welcome. Thank you. Anybody else? [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thanks, Alice. [LR186]

ALICE DRAKE: Okay. Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Okay. I'm going to go to Stephen O'Meara from the AG's Office. Welcome. [LR186]

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STEPHEN PATRICK O'MEARA: Thank you. Stephen Patrick O'Meara, S-t-e-p-h-e-n P-a-t-r-i-c-k O-'-M-e-a-r-a. I'm an Assistant Nebraska Attorney General and among my duties I'm the coordinator of the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force. And let me begin with the point that the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force is not the federal grant. It's the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force. The federal grant would be in aid of establishing the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force. But the Attorney General made the commitment well in advance of the awarding of the grant to proceed with this model of establishing the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force. It is intentionally multidisciplinary. So, for example, one of the last questions about where would the expertise come from with regard to minors, although The Salvation Army may contain that somewhat themselves, within the throes of the task force there are other people who are specifically, in Nebraska, experts with regard to minors both in terms of referral for services and providing those services. It's my understanding that The Salvation Army is committed to this multidisciplinary collaborative effort which, in fact, the grant requires, but also the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force requires. So the expertise would be drawn from the task force as a whole and channeled through the administrators of the task force. A few things to look at, under the task force itself, it's basically divided into the spheres of law enforcement services and community partners, and all three of those are essential parts of carrying out the anticipated responsibilities of this task force. All have to work together. And actually, as a state, we've moved very rapidly on this. The state of Iowa took two and a half years to get to the point that they rolled out their program this last summer. The state of Nebraska has done this essentially in five months because of the collaborative effort that has been undertaken and looking at other situations. As a part of what we are trying to do, we are certainly addressing cultural change as well as existing structures. Among those are the look...and all of this is addressed in the plan that you folks have in front of you...looking at the community care-taking function of the police, that goes goes directly to the issue of decriminalization or criminalization. There is no intent, no provision in this plan to seek to in any way criminalize particularly minors, but anyone who is readily identified as being a victim. But with regard to that, I would suggest that there are some things that have to be looked at. One is the cultural change. And there certainly would be training and other things under this plan to address that. That's crucial. Another part of that is looking at the assessment system and has already been identified. One of the first committees that was established under this process was a screening and assessment committee. That committee is looking not only at tools in aid of screening and assessment, but

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also at training with regard to that, and also at recommendations with regard to a disposition toward being able to implement that type of an approach. But I would emphasize, as we have in the working groups, screening and assessment is not an event, it is a process. And, therefore, it is necessary to have services to engage in that process meaningfully. Victims, whether minors or adult, have to understand that they are protected, that they have shelter, and that they have specialized services. Not to have any one of those components would fail them; and if we fail them in delivery of services, that victim becomes revictimized. However, if we are successful in meaningfully addressing services to that victim but fail to stop the trafficker that victimized that person, we are in the business of creating additional victims because this is market driven and that's simply what happens routinely. This also addresses the issue about transborder. Carry that analogy further: It's not only if something is done well in Nebraska that it will move to Iowa, the criminal conduct will, but if something is done well in Omaha and Lincoln but not across the state, that trafficking will simply move out into the rural areas, and there are already examples of that. If you have questions, I would try to answer them. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you. Senator Krist. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Thanks for coming. And some of your comments were directed at some of mine, so I just want to make sure you understand. There is going to be additional money that's going to be required, there's no question about it. So the money that's coming in from the federal side is going to have to be augmented, supplemented by the Legislature in the appropriations process. There is no way that you're going to fund this on \$1.5 million. So my point is this. I watched, my time here in the Legislature, we reinvent the wheel, we set up a structure. It's not efficient, it doesn't work, and then people come back to the Legislature and say, oops, we need another \$2.3 million or \$12.5 million. I'm not second-guessing you putting The Salvation Army in place. But on the child welfare side, these children advocates, the advocacy centers that are across the state have a wealth of information. We don't need to reinvent the wheel. I'm not going to get up on that soapbox again and say that, but you're going to have to come to us and you're going to have to ask for money through your own budget or through legislative process. I want to help. I don't want this problem around any more than anybody else does. But how this system gets set up, how your task force gets set up, I understand it's not federal money. It's not the federal grant. There are some parameters that the federal grant requires you to report under. I get

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that. My caution is the task force needs to be efficient. We need to spend the money on the kids or the adults that are in the process and not necessarily on overhead structure. And my only other comment would be the task force may have been a five-month process, and I applaud you for moving as fast as you can, but this has been a legislative effort for the last three and a half years. We've been moving in this direction for a long time. So I'm not going to call it disingenuous, but for the record I'm just going to say this state has had human trafficking in their bullseye for several years and I applaud Attorney General Peterson for coming in and emphasizing that and accentuating the process and putting his foot on the accelerator but credit due where it needs to be due as well. [LR186]

STEPHEN PATRICK O'MEARA: If you look at the report and recommendations that I think you have a copy of, I think there's three or four pages of the history of the development of getting us to where we are in Nebraska, so certainly both I, as an individual, and the Attorney General have given lavish credit to a number of people, naming several of those people specifically, and many entities, probably beginning in 2006 but certainly by 2008 that are responsible for getting us to where we are today. We also have made a clear point that 50 to 60 people and entities other than either the Attorney General's Office or The Salvation Army have come together in this really significant collaborative process in Nebraska to bring us to the point as quickly as we have. So there is no question that this is not a unilateral nor a new action but, in fact, some new things are happening and there will be people that will actually be working and organizing, I don't know so much building a new structure as organizing. I think the only structure that comes into this that I'm aware of is really, in essence, structure that is required by the federal grant. And certainly there would need to be, to bring this collaborative effort together there would need to be coordination in some fashion with regard to those three working group concepts, both the working groups with regard to enforcement, the working group with regard to services, and the community partners. So there would have to be some administrative capability, but certainly the emphasis is on organizing and delivering the services, whether it be law enforcement or trauma-informed wraparound care to victims and survivors. That is the clear emphasis of the plan. In fact, again, in the written materials that you have, the principles of the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force are set forth. The ninth principle--I believe it's number nine, it's the last one--is that we would make the greatest use possible of existing structures,

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people, and programs in recognition of a number of factors. So I think we have held true to that in this best beginning point plan that we've tried to put forward to the state. [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: I think between the two of us we've put a lot of things on the record that need to be on the record, and I appreciate that. Godspeed, because this is an effort that needs to be solved, an issue needs to be solved. And the only other thing I would add for the record, only for the record because we had this conversation last year and will continue to have it, any attempt to criminalize a juvenile within the system, as long as I'm here, I will fight vehemently against, so. [LR186]

STEPHEN PATRICK O'MEARA: Can I make a couple just suggestions on that point because we... [LR186]

SENATOR KRIST: Sure. [LR186]

STEPHEN PATRICK O'MEARA: I understand that if there is an issue that would get homed in on the most, that's...other than the agreement on the need to serve, that that's the issue. And so I think there are some things out there that we are really looking at and, as far as I understand, the consensus of the working group process is definitely not to seek to in any sense, really whether adult or minor, to criminalize. But I think there's some things that we could look at. There probably would need to be a look at creating some services that are more particularized, particularly with youthful recidivist runaways, to provide something particularly at the assessment stage and going forward from there. But before that, one of the things that we are really emphasizing in the plan that is proposed is to have victim specialist contact essentially from the first contact with an individual, be it adult or minor, for the specific purpose of, number one, identifying where the individual most needs to be referred--if it's an acute service situation, if it's an assessment situation, whatever--but also to establish that genuine trust relationship, all of those words being important, which is at the very heart of trying to serve these victims and survivors, whether minors or adults, but certainly with regard to minors. And those would be individuals that would have enhanced training with regard to dealing with these circumstances. So whether the first contact was law enforcement or a service provider, CPS call, whatever it was, as soon as there is a contact which begins to identify human trafficking, this type of an

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approach would be available, and then also special screening and assessment tools and techniques to allow people to more readily identify and get them to the right place to try to help them. But we also, if we look at this as a market-driven situation, we have to look at part of this as the supply/demand situation. And if you look at it in that gross sense, you have to deal with the supply, which is the victims and the survivors. And to do that, you also have to have and you have to look at those vulnerabilities which really make these people really, frankly, whether minors or adults, susceptible to what happens in this victimization. And that includes things such as mental and developmental disability, substance abuse, maybe other forms of addictions, too, but particularly substance abuse, poverty particularly as expressed in homelessness, and other factors that tend to isolate people in the community. So if we're ultimately really going to work on this, we have to look at those things too. But in the acute situation of victimization in human trafficking, part of what the plan provides is, for example, there must be a mental health component. There has to be consideration of that because that is, by experience, such a significant part of what happens here, whether adult or minor. So I think there are things there that we can already look at. And one other thing I would point out is that the Strengthening Families Act of 2015, which also brings people like DHHS and the Administrative Office of the Courts into this program, this truly collaborative, multidisciplinary program, the encouragement under the Strengthening Families Act of 2015 is to look at the provision of minor-style services up till a person is age 26. And clearly the reason for that is part of the reason that it is, per se, protection for minors under human trafficking and that is very much the realization that the neuropsychological development of most people would indicate that the center of judgment in the brain does really not develop until about age 27, 28. And so we really definitely have to be looking at that as part of the issue of dealing especially with young people under age 18, but really even going beyond that. And what can happen in particularly traumatic situations of human trafficking with minors is that their brain chemistry literally rewires their brain and they, in essence, become stuck in place. And so we not only have individuals that exhibit the many vulnerabilities that they have that most of the youth that are engaged in...as victims in human trafficking, but they also have these issues that are unique to their age itself. And so we really have to consider those factors when we're trying to plan what resources do we need and how can we provide a safe situation for assessment to plan on going forward, and then addressing those other things in the system that we talked about. So I would kind of share the statement that was

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made earlier. This is an extremely complex problem to deal with, and I think the plan again gives us a good...a best beginning point to try to do that in the state of Nebraska. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you. Senator Pansing Brooks. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Well, I just want to thank you for your efforts. Obviously these words coming from the Attorney General's Office are huge, in my opinion. I think if this all goes forward as you state and to have you helping to coordinate law enforcement is huge because it's my understanding...are you taking this...you're going to go to eight law enforcement agencies across the state to start teaching about this? Is that correct? What's the plan? [LR186]

STEPHEN PATRICK O'MEARA: The state has been tentatively divided into six regions following the regions of the Nebraska State Patrol by consensus of the working groups, again including the services working group and the enforcement working group. And we would anticipate some state-level training, but also taking specific training out within those regions to create greater expertise with regard to dealing with human trafficking and weaving together, really integrating both the ability to know who to contact with regard to enforcement and protection needs as well as service needs as those are identified through the good work of all the people that are helping in this, and then also to provide, particularly in conjunction with child protection training that is being rolled out in more districts within the state, training for every sworn officer in the state so that every sworn officer should be able to have a rudimentary recognition of signs of human trafficking and an ability to know what to do to try to rescue in those circumstances. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: And it was my understanding that also a...at least an encouragement that we have to start looking at the source and all the traffickers and the sellers and the purchasers. Is that correct? [LR186]

STEPHEN PATRICK O'MEARA: The plan in its entirety is devoted to helping victims, stopping human traffickers, and reducing the market, one of the main functions of reducing the market being to go after the buyer or, in the general concept, the consumer either of sex trafficking or labor trafficking, realizing that there is already some federal case law which could be applicable

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in the state to deal with buyers in certain situations as though they were themselves human traffickers. [LR186]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: Okay. And I just want to say one more thing about I think it's really important that you are talking about adults as well because it's much easier to just look at children and say, no, they had no intent, there's nothing they could have done wrong. Looking at it from the fact that our frontal lobes don't develop until we're age 26 and the knowledge that most of these--generally women but men, too--have been abused through their lives, they...you know, if we look at them and they're minors and they turn 18, all of a sudden, they're in the adult world and it's too easy to let the adults go in some of this. So I...part of the things that we learned was the interconnection of the tangential crimes such as substance abuse and all sorts of things like being forced to steal and to bring others into the whole trafficking world. And so again, as you say, it's complex. But I have great hope that the senior law enforcement person in our state is focusing on this hideous issue. And we want to support you; we hope you will use this incredible plethora of help that you have behind you and, again, not reinvent the wheel. I'm with Senator Krist. There's so much that's been done but I think you're aware of that. So I just wish you the best and we need to hopefully continue to have updates and know what's going on. And we want to be supportive and do things as well. [LR186]

STEPHEN PATRICK O'MEARA: Thank you. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: All right. Thank you, Stephen. Okay, next we're going to hear from Leticia. Hopefully I said that right. [LR186]

LETICIA BONIFAS: Yes, Leticia. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Okay. Very good. Appreciate you coming. [LR186]

LETICIA BONIFAS: Thank you all for inviting me and taking the time. I know everybody is tired. And I appreciate everybody that's been here to testify because this is the reason that we're here. And I don't...oh, I need to spell my name: L-e-t-i-c-i-a; Bonifas, B-o-n-i-f-a-s. I'm the founder and executive director of Central Nebraska Human Trafficking and Immigration

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Outreach in Lexington. And to not take away from anything, with not any respect, I will not look up from my paper because these are her words and her words mean more than what I could say. And I have changed her name. I'm "Tina" and this is my story. I write this to try to help you understand the seriousness of human trafficking in small-town Nebraska. I was bought, sold, auctioned in many states. I met people that could have really helped me along the way. Most of them were there only to hurt and take advantage of me. I couldn't understand. I was a good person. I really didn't even know what was happening to me was a crime. Once I realized I was a victim of human trafficking, I started looking for help. There is little to nothing in Nebraska that offers support services, mental health, or housing for people like myself. I feel that if there were more services for victims like myself, I would have not had to have left the state to get help. I continue on my journey today, getting healthier and happier with each passing day. This is where it started. I was five years old when my mother and her boyfriend sold me for the first time for meth and money. I remained in and out of foster care, the foster care system for the remainder of my childhood and teenage years. I haven't been able to understand why this happened. I am working on that though. All I know is I have tried very hard and have struggled to get where I am today. I have met genuine people along this journey. Some have helped me. Others have hurt me. I may have made some bad choices and I own those. All I wanted was to be free, free from the many type of abuse that I suffered over the years. I have a ways to go but I believe that I'll make it. There are many times that I've asked the right questions that people that were in my life would have known that I am a victim of human sex trafficking. I was sexually and physically abused for many years by many different men. I was in 21 placements here in Nebraska from the age of 5 until the age of 18. At that time is when everyone, including myself, finally gave up on me and let me go. I was placed in hospitals, juvenile detention centers, YRTC, foster home after foster home. I was a runner. I know people were sick of my actions and my behavior. Heck, I was sick of my life as well. But had they only taken the time to find out the scope of the problem, I would have had a chance at life. The system could have really worked for me but, instead, it gave up on me. Each time I would run, I would end up back in the game. At times it was for survival; other times it's because this was all I knew. I thought it was normal to use my body in this way. I felt wanted by some but used by so many. From the age of 13 to 14 I was placed in the hospital for suicide attempt and cutting. There were so many opportunities for people to ask what was really going on again, and even if they would have asked, I did not know I was a human trafficking victim. I was in seven...I was in juvenile detention centers seven times. No one asked--again, not

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sure I would have identified as a victim. All I know is I was angry and didn't even understand why. Could I explain in a way people could understand? I don't know. I wasn't given that opportunity. Doctors, nurses, counselors, therapists, teachers, foster parents, juvenile detention center employees, judges, probation officers, group home employees all missed it. It isn't their fault. Most people just don't think that people are being trafficked, that American children are being trafficked and trafficked right here in Nebraska. I looked for answers in every situation I was in. I really didn't understand why or how it has happened. All I know is it did and I want people to know about it. As I grew each day, I look back at all that I've been through and could not believe I made it this far. I saw many of my friends get taken, taken away in cars never to be seen again. I was beat repeatedly. I was forced to do things that I didn't want to do. There was consequences if I didn't do what I was told. At times it was easier for me to do what they said. This would avoid a beating. I was forced to work many hours with little to no pay, little to eat, and very little sleep. I looked for support and attention and received it the only way I knew how. The streets was a place I could be myself, express myself, live free from rules but not free from the chains that bonded me. I thought some of these men were my boyfriends. That's what they told me at first. Then I realized that when we were out of money, that I would have to help him pay rent. If I loved him, I would help him, right? I was beaten, raped, hooked on drugs, and lived the life the only way I knew how. To survive or not to survive was my only option. I knew that I had brothers and sisters that I had left behind and knew that I would have to at some point step up and take care of them. I wonder if what happened to me was happening to them. Nebraska, 2014, I was in a domestic violence shelter from a previous relationship. I was on craigslist looking for jobs and a place to live. I came across an ad that said, I need another roommate. I call them and I even met up with the couple. They had a nice house and family. I told people, yeah...I told them, yeah, that I would move in. And they told me not to worry about a job, they had one for me already. I apologize. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: You can go ahead and finish the letter. [LR186]

LETICIA BONIFAS: Thank you. I moved in and within the first day I knew I had fell into a trap. She was a prostitute and he was her pimp. She helped him get more females. After about a month there, I got a friend that helped me out. I got addicted to cocaine. He beat me at least one time each day. I was fixed to make at least \$900 a night. I got 30 percent of the money and got

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every Tuesday off. I had a friend in the same town who helped me get away. She is a prostitute herself. She came and got me out. She came and got me help and got me into a shelter there. The shelter there helped me get back to small-town Nebraska. She wasn't strong enough to get herself out but she was able to help me out. I was bought, sold, and auctioned in different cities, Nebraska, Colorado, and Tennessee. I ran from there and ended up in Kearney and that's where I met Leticia who helped me get my life back on track, straight, and helped me understand more and helped me move on. I was in human trafficking in Dallas, Texas, before Omaha. Leticia searched for every possible resource that could help me. There was none. I was able to stay a couple of nights in a shelter but that was all. I left Nebraska to get help and ended up back out on the streets. Had there been housing or a safe house or services to help me, I might not have left Nebraska. Once back on the streets, I realized I had made a mistake. Of course I thought he was my boyfriend. He tricked me into tricking again. This went on for months. I was afraid to call anyone that had helped me before because I was embarrassed. I knew they would be mad, mad that I had gotten myself back into the game. I thought about it and I called Leticia. She passed no judgment and helped me to escape. She, along with the other organizations in the United States, all came together to help me. They worked hard to get me out, not only out of the game but out of the state. Now I'm in another state with a great boyfriend, a child on the way. I'm doing counseling, working on my GED and CNA. I would not have been where I am today had it not been for Leticia, Bishop Outreach, and another organization. Leticia helped me get here. Central Nebraska Human Trafficking and Immigration Outreach is doing great things. I'm really not sure what all is needed in Nebraska. All I know is there needs to be somewhere for people like me to go, not just overnight but maybe a little longer. Had I just got to rest, really rest, and got my mind straight, that would have really helped me. Had I been able to talk to someone who understands what a victim of human trafficking goes through, that would have helped to help me write it down and take the time to really hear me. Even if it didn't make sense, it made sense to me. Thank you for taking the time to read my story. I hope I have helped. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you for sharing that story. That's a Nebraska...that was a Nebraska story? [LR186]

LETICIA BONIFAS: Yes, sir. [LR186]

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SENATOR COASH: The young woman that you mentioned, all those placements, my assumption after hearing that was she was a ward of the state for most of her childhood. [LR186]

LETICIA BONIFAS: Yes, sir. And she...at the age of 18, they just let her go. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: So they...so she had from a very young age a person from the government that was responsible for her welfare. [LR186]

LETICIA BONIFAS: Yes, sir. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: Couldn't get it done. [LR186]

LETICIA BONIFAS: But did you realize in her story she states it's not their fault? She even...and sticks up for those people, the people that were trying to help her throughout...that they were doing the best they could with what they knew how. But without the training, education, the awareness stuff, it's hard to identify. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: I appreciate that there's a...everybody over at CPS is wanting to do good things and the right things. [LR186]

LETICIA BONIFAS: Absolutely. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: But we...I mean I think lack of services aside, you know, the state failed her anyway. And I think we have to own our responsibility to the fact that this young woman was a state ward which means the state had a responsibility for her welfare... [LR186]

LETICIA BONIFAS: Yes, sir. [LR186]

SENATOR COASH: ...and failed to provide that. But thanks for sharing that story. [LR186]

LETICIA BONIFAS: Thank you. [LR186]

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SENATOR COASH: We appreciate...that was a good way to end the hearing, remembering why we're here, so we appreciate that very much. With that, we thank everybody for their testimony. The committee will take any written testimony that if folks want to weigh in via anything, you can do that through any of our offices and we'll make that part of the record as well. Thank you.
[LR186]