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To: Senate Workforce Development Committee
From: David Tamisiea, Executive Director
Date: March 14, 2025
Re: HB 1308 — Human Trafficking Commission

The North Dakota Catholic Conference strongly supports common-sense legislation to fight against the scourge of human trafficking and the closely related crimes of prostitution and commercial exploitation of children. These intersecting crimes violate the dignity of the human person, the sanctity of human life, and fundamental rights of the human person.

All three of the last popes (John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis) and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have publicly decried human trafficking and called for its eradication and for the protection of its victims. Our two North Dakotan bishops, Bishop David Kagan and Bishop John Folda, have also asked that addressing the problem of human trafficking be made a legislative priority.

Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked for labor or commercial sex acts worldwide – including right here in North Dakota. It can happen in any community, and victims can be any age, race, gender, or nationality. Human trafficking often is hidden and goes unidentified. It is a crime that flourishes in darkness.

HB 1308 aims to combat human trafficking in our state by making the Human Trafficking Commission a permanent body. The bill also empowers the Commission to require human trafficking awareness and prevention training for members of certain regulated occupations and professions like doctors, lawyers, and teachers. This is an important measure in the fight against trafficking because these professions have a higher likelihood of encountering human trafficking victims in their work. The bill also provides immunity from liability for these occupations and professions for reporting human trafficking to law enforcement.

We respectfully ask for a **Do Pass** recommendation on House Bill 1308.