

2009 SENATE JUDICIARY

SB 2209

2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2209

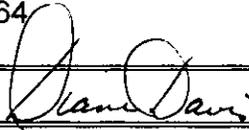
Senate Judiciary Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 1/27/09

Recorder Job Number: 7864

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes: **Senator D. Nething, Chairman**

Relating to human trafficking

Senator Dever –District 32 – Introduces the bill – Believes this is a good bill and that the crime is a cold, calculated intrusion into the lives of other people.

Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem – Tells of a trip of trip he took with a group down to

Mexico and meet with our counterparts there and discuss the problems with drugs in the US.

Mexico said we are also causing problems for them. Our country is where the demand and

resources to buy drugs come from and where the arms that are being imported to kill the

Mexican police officers come from. And our country is responsible for one of the most

enormous problems that they see and a problem seen around the world and that is human

trafficking. As a result of this meeting they will now meet on a regular basis. Human trafficking

is a problem that transcends international borders. Human trafficking is not smuggling of

individuals where there is consent, we are talking of human slavery. It may be for the sex

trade but also trading in the labor traffic. This problem is growing in severity. After drugs and

possibly the arms trade, human trafficking is the 3rd largest economic crime that occurs across

the globe. This bill is designed to act for the state of ND legislation that already exists on a

Federal level and will enable us and BCI to work with counterparts on the Federal level to

eradicate this problem. He said there is actually two bills, one in the House, HB 1185. This bill, 2209 is a little better but the House bill has more severe penalties. The most severe under this statute is a Class A felony for trafficking in minor children. He gives the charges for the different crimes. Sometime he believes these two bills should be melded together. Human trafficking is a huge problem and deprives people of the very basic concept of freedom and human dignity. In ND this isn't a big problem as exists in other states. We see it mostly in transportation through here to the larger cities.

Senator Schneider – Asks about how we can bring together the House bill and this bill.

Stenehjem – He states that there are some major differences between the two bills. If you use this bill you would enhance the penalties.

Senator Fiebiger – Asks if this language mirrors the Federal language. Asks if this language is overly broad.

Stenehjem – No. It makes it clear that we are not talking about cases where somebody is involved in community service as a part of a sentence in a criminal case or other things that might be required for somebody in prison to work in prison industries.

Representative Hawken – In support of this bill – Asks if in addition to the penalties to also add some protection for the victims, particularly true in women and young girls. Victim assistance is an important component as well as penalties. Go the one step further.

Senator Fiebiger – Asks what kind of assistance she has in mind.

Hawken – States she has several things that could be considered.

Christopher Dodson – Executive Director of ND Catholic Conference – See written testimony.

They strongly support this bill.

2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2209

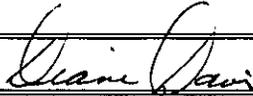
Senate Judiciary Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 1/27/09

Recorder Job Number: 7868

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes: **Senator D. Nething, Chairman**

Committee work

Committee discusses the amendments and what language to change.

Senator Schneider asks for one day to talk with some people about the changes and to come back to committee with a report.

2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2209

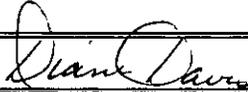
Senate Judiciary Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 2/2/09

Recorder Job Number: 8364 forward to 29:00

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes: **Senator D. Nething, Chairman**

Committee work

Committee discusses the amendment that was put on it.

Senator Schneider – Explained the story behind the amendment. He said that other states that have adopted this have this language in there. With the limited time we are facing it is about the only victim protection provision that could be put in there without a fiscal note on it. Attorney General is fine with it. He talked with an organization out of New York that specializes in anti-human trafficking legislation. Everyone is fine with this. Emphasizes that this is a crime with actual victims. This mandatory restitution provision confirms that.

Senator Schneider moves the amendments

Senator Lyson seconds

Discussion

Senator Fiebiger – He asks what restitution means.

Senator Schneider – Responds, he gives an example of a “coyote” who is running Mexican immigrants over the border from Canada into ND and is collecting a fee for this. These individuals are victims of human trafficking, forced into labor for these “coyotes”. The coyotes would be forced to pay the victims for injuries to them.

Senator Nething - Responds we do not determine restitution amounts. The courts decide that.

Verbal vote on the amendment, all yea

Senator Schneider moves do pass as amended

Senator Lyson seconds

Vote – 6-0

Senator Schneider will carry

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2209: Judiciary Committee (Sen. Nething, Chairman) recommends AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2209 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 17, replace "A" with "AA"

Page 1, line 18, replace "B" with "A"

Page 1, after line 22, insert:

"4. In addition to any sentence or fine imposed for a conviction of an offense under this chapter, the court shall order the person convicted to make restitution to the victim of the crime."

Re-number accordingly

2009 HOUSE JUDICIARY

SB 2209

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. SB 2209

House Judiciary Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 3/10/09

Recorder Job Number: 10601, 10602

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman DeKrey: We will open the hearing on SB 2209.

Wayne Stenehjem, Attorney General: Support. Explained the bill. This is a very important issue. This bill has to do with prohibition and criminality of human trafficking. It was a topic that you have seen before and we've seen it in the form of HB 1185, which has some corresponding features of the bill and am hopeful that one of these two bills will pass and you work out any differences as you see fit. HB 1185 is the other bill, and I'm not going to reiterate all the information that was presented to you about the dangers and problems associated with human trafficking. SB 2209 contains all the features plus a couple of additional items that I want to mention. The bill was amended so that the penalties track the trafficking in minor children under the age of 18 as a Class AA felony now under this bill, as opposed to a class A felony otherwise. The definitions are basically the same. A couple of additions that are in SB 2209 that are not in HB 1185, this bill criminalizes benefiting financially or receiving anything of value or knowingly participation in human trafficking. In other words, the lawyers will know that this is something for which a legal action will be permissible. You can go after those who are engaging in human trafficking for money, and relieve them of the advantages they obtained. The other thing in this bill, which is not in the other bill, is the trafficking for the purposes of

sexual activity, it is something for which someone who is convicted will have to register as a sexual offender, which isn't in HB 1185, but now it is in this bill. If you traffic for the purposes of sexual commerce, then you would have to register as a sex offender in the state of ND. I suggest perhaps that you confer with your counterparts over in the Senate side and decide how and in what form you may want to pass this bill. I want to mention that Sen. Dever is testifying on another bill elsewhere and couldn't be here. You might not initially think that this is a problem here in ND, but it is either a problem that is coming or we do see it in ND where individuals are passing through the state of ND to a destination outside our state, either from Canada down the interstate highway over to MN, where much of the problems that we see do arise are trafficked across the US over the interstate highway systems, and wind up in areas like Chicago, Minneapolis. We haven't seen too much of a problem recorded at the BCI in ND, or in my office, except we do have information to indicate that they are being transported through our state.

Rep. Kretschmar: Are there similar laws in our border states.

Wayne Stenehjem: There is a federal law that has been passed and will be in effect nationwide for those who are crossing borders, and then there has been legislation similar to what you see before you that is being enacted by a number of states across the country.

Chairman DeKrey: Thank you. Further testimony in support.

Rep. Lois Delmore: Co-sponsor, support. I am a prime sponsor of HB 1185 and co-sponsor on this bill; I would certainly urge your support. It is an issue that we need to address in this state. There is little left of my bill, I think what they're going to do is make a couple of other amendments on it and send it out. I would encourage your support of this bill. It is an important issue and I think it is a big step for us.

Chairman DeKrey: Thank you. Further testimony in support.

Rep. Kathy Hawken: Co-sponsor, support. You have heard from the sponsors and the AG about why we think this is an important issue and want to go forward.

Chairman DeKrey: Thank you. Further testimony in support.

Kirstie Rose Dienert, Bismarck High School student: Support (attachment).

Chairman DeKrey: Thank you. Further testimony in support.

Christopher Dodson, Executive Director, ND Catholic Conference: Support. One of the questions that was raised is how are we going to assist in helping, such as law enforcement, hospitals, social services and identify victims and get them to assistance. There are a series of brochures and pamphlets that the federal government has specifically designed for distribution. There is one for law enforcement, one for emergency rooms, etc. I discussed this with the AG's office and I feel it is just a matter of after this law has passed, which ever bill is passed, of getting that information out to the public and various organizations in ND, and the AG has said he will work at that. The next question that came up was what services are available to victims of human trafficking. There is a federal law has a victim identification process. If you are identified as a victim of human trafficking, you are automatically eligible for the same government services that are available to a refugee with refugee status. There is no change to the law, but just a matter of getting people the information they need to help.

Chairman DeKrey: Thank you. Further testimony in support. Testimony in opposition. We will close the hearing. What are the committee's wishes in regard to SB 2209?

Rep. Delmore: I move a Do Pass.

Rep. Hatlestad: Second.

11 YES 0 NO 2 ABSENT

DO PASS

CARRIER: Rep. Delmore

Date: 3/10/09

Roll Call Vote #: 1

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2209

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Check here for Conference Committee LC Amendment # _____

Action: DP DP / As Amended & Rerefer to Approp.
 DNP DNP / As Amended

Motion Made By Rep. Delmore Seconded By Rep. Hatlestad

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Ch. DeKrey	✓		Rep. Delmore	✓	
Rep. Klemin	✓		Rep. Griffin	✓	
Rep. Boehning	✓		Rep. Vig	✓	
Rep. Dahl			Rep. Wolf	✓	
Rep. Hatlestad	✓		Rep. Zaiser		
Rep. Kingsbury	✓				
Rep. Koppelman	✓				
Rep. Kretschmar	✓				

Total (Yes) 11 (No) 0 (Absent) 2

Floor Carrier: Rep. Delmore

Vote is amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
March 10, 2009 3:58 p.m.

Module No: HR-43-4517
Carrier: Delmore
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2209, as engrossed: Judiciary Committee (Rep. DeKrey, Chairman) recommends DO PASS (11 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed SB 2209 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.

2009 TESTIMONY

SB 2209

Attachment 1
SB 2209



Representing the Diocese of Fargo
and the Diocese of Bismarck

Christopher T. Dodson
Executive Director and
General Counsel

To: Senate Judiciary Committee
From: Christopher T. Dodson, Executive Director
Subject: Senate Bill 2209 - Human Trafficking
Date: January 27, 2009

The North Dakota Catholic Conference strongly supports Senate Bill 2209.

Right behind the illegal drug trade, human trafficking ties with arms dealing as the second largest criminal activity in the world. The U.S. State Department estimates that between 600,000 and 800,000 men, women, and children are trafficked across international borders each year and approximately 17,500 of them are trafficked into the U.S. annually. Based on estimates by the U.S. government of the numbers of all trafficking victims and comparing those figures with widely cited figures of foreign-born children in the sex trade in the United States, some sources estimate that about one-third of foreign born victims trafficked into the country are children. In addition to these numbers, trafficking of U.S. citizens occurs *within* the U.S., although estimates are not readily available.

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery. It is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person by force, fraud, or coercion, or deceit for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor - including debt bondage and child soldiering. These acts violate the dignity and nature of the human person and are nothing less than crimes against humanity.

Victims of human trafficking are often poor and desperate. They see migration as a way to escape oppressive and dire conditions. At the same time, there is "demand" in more developed countries for forced labor and sex trade services.

Human traffickers promise unsuspecting victims an opportunity to travel to a foreign land for employment and housing. Some arrive at their location legally. At the end of the journey, however, their freedom is removed by physical force, psychological coercion or abuse, blackmail, or addiction to drugs. Traffickers force victims to work in the sex trade, as domestic servants, as manual laborers, or soldiers.

Victims of human trafficking suffer physical, mental, and psychological abuse. Many become ill with disease, infected with HIV, and subjected to forced abortions.¹ Some manage to escape, but are forced into criminal activity in order to survive in a foreign land without legal authorization. Some are discovered and rescued, but suffer long-term consequences from their ordeal. Some are never discovered.

Combatting human trafficking requires a comprehensive effort involving communities from the local level to the international sphere. That is why this legislation is important. We must place enforcement and prosecution at every level possible.

Finally, we must address the demand side of the equation, not just with laws, but also with changes in attitudes. Whenever people engage in sex tourism or turn a blind eye to unjust work conditions, they contribute to the environment that allows human trafficking to flourish. These actions ultimately impact real people and violate the dignity of a child of God.

Senate Bill 2209 alone may not end human trafficking. It can, however, comprise one part of the overall effort to end this crime against humanity.

We urge a **Do Pass** recommendation on Senate Bill 2209.

¹ The U.S. Department of State reports that "sex trafficking plays a major role" in spreading the HIV/AIDS epidemic as well as the development of drug-resistant strains of other sexually transmitted infections. Research indicates that of the millions of women and girls forced into prostitution each year, approximately 45% are infected with the human papillomavirus (HPV). According to a 2003 European Union study on the health consequences of human trafficking, victims of sex trafficking are frequently subjected to forced abortions. *Health Consequences of Trafficking in Persons*, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons; August 8, 2007; <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/fs/07/91418.htm>.

ADOPTED AMENDMENTS to SB 2209

Page 1 line 7, replace "A" with "AA"

Page 1, line 8 replace "B" with "A"

UNOFFICIAL AMENDMENTS to SB 2009

Page 1, after line 22, insert:

4. In addition to any sentence or fine imposed for a conviction of an offense under this chapter, the court shall order the person convicted to make restitution to the victim of the crime.

The document *On Human Trafficking* was developed as a resource by the Committee on Migration of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was reviewed by the committee chairman, Bishop Gerald R. Barnes, and has been authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Msgr. David J. Malloy, STD
General Secretary, USCCB

Photos: Kay Chernush for the U.S. State Department.

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To report a suspected human trafficking situation or to seek assistance, contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services hotline at (888) 373-7888 or the joint U.S. Departments of Justice and Labor hotline at (888) 428-7581.



Publication No. M5-682
United States Conference of
Catholic Bishops
Washington, D.C.



**Committee on Migration
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

The movement of people across boundaries is part of a collective human experience. There is an element of this experience that must be eradicated: the trafficking of human beings through the use of fraud, force, and coercion for the purpose of forced prostitution or forced labor.

Now, in the twenty-first century, this practice reaches every corner of the globe, from Asia and Africa to Europe and the Americas. It is also present in the United States, as vulnerable men, women, and children are trafficked into our country from other lands. Moreover, U.S. citizens and residents are trafficked within our country.

We, the Committee on Migration of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), call attention to this tragic reality to raise awareness among Catholics and others of good will about its devastating impact on vulnerable persons. We urge Catholics to work together to identify survivors of human trafficking and to help rescue them from their bondage.

Catholic Teaching and Human Trafficking

The Catholic Church has condemned human trafficking and has developed social service programs to serve and protect its survivors.

During Vatican II, the Catholic Church reaffirmed its historic concern about forced labor, stating that “slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, [and] disgraceful working conditions where [people] are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons” are “infamies”¹ and “an affront to fundamental values . . . values rooted in the very nature of the human person.”²

In the 2006 annual statement on migration, entitled “Migrations: A Sign of the Times,” Pope Benedict XVI deplored the “trafficking of human beings—especially women—which flourishes where opportunities to improve their standard of living or even to survive are limited.” Similarly the Holy See emphasized related concerns in a recent address at the United Nations, stating that treating a woman “not as a human person with rights on an equal basis with others, but as an object to be exploited, very often underlies violence against women.” In this

context, “an increasing scourge is trafficking of women and girls, as well as various forms of prostitution.”³

Pope John Paul II, in a letter on the occasion of the International Conference on “Twenty-First-Century Slavery—the Human Rights Dimension to Trafficking in Human Beings,” stated that human trafficking “constitutes a shocking offense against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights. In particular, the sexual exploitation of women and children is a particularly repugnant aspect of this trade, and must be recognized as an intrinsic violation of human dignity and human rights.”⁴

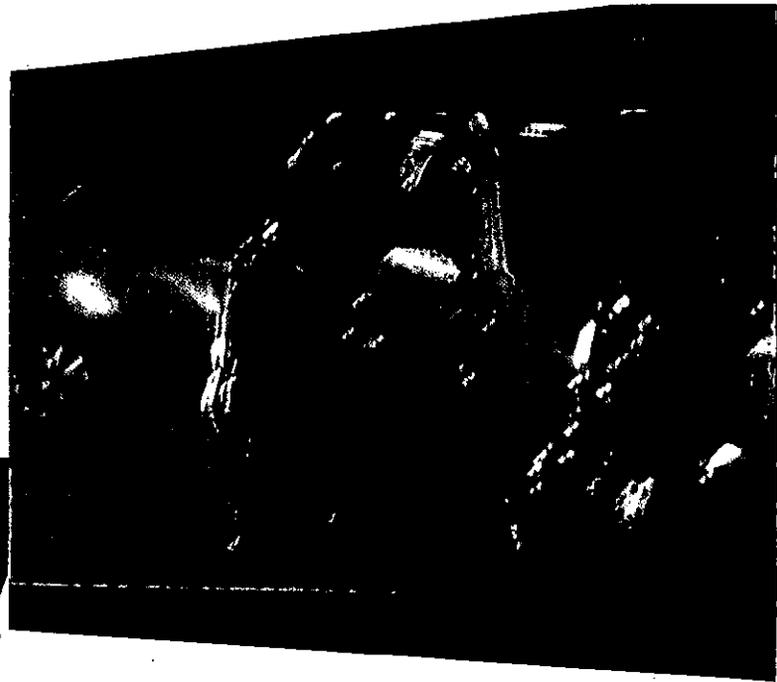
The Catholic bishops of the United States and Mexico have also spoken out on the issue, calling upon the governments of the United States and Mexico to work together to apprehend traffickers and destroy trafficking networks: “Both governments must vigilantly seek to end trafficking in human persons. . . . Together, both governments should more effectively share information on trafficking operations and should engage in joint action to apprehend and prosecute traffickers.”⁵

The USCCB Committee on Migration reaffirmed the commitment of the Catholic bishops of the United States to end this abominable practice: “The Catholic Church . . . in the United States stands ready to work with our government to end this scourge. We cannot rest until trafficking in human persons is eliminated from the globe.”⁶



The Reality of Human Trafficking

As many as 700,000 persons are trafficked globally each year—men, women, and children. Survivors of human trafficking are commonly linked by poverty and lack of opportunity. They are also connected by their desperation and their perception of migration as an accessible escape route. Often they seek to escape life in an oppressive slum, with the hope of finding opportunity and a brighter future elsewhere.



This is not a problem that exists merely on faraway shores and in developing countries. It exists right here in the United States, where thousands of persons are trafficked each year for purposes of forced prostitution or forced labor.

It is estimated that as many as 17,500 human beings each year are trafficked into the United States. Men, women, and children have been forced to work in prostitution and have been forced into different types of manual labor, without pay or protection.

Trafficking in persons is a modern-day form of slavery, and it is the largest manifestation of slavery today.

The Response to Human Trafficking

The global community, including the United States, is only beginning to comprehend the scope and impact of the selling of human persons in the world. As a result, humane responses to this phenomenon have been slow, and education of the public lacking. New efforts involving the entire international community are necessary to eliminate the root causes of it, to offer proper care and attention to its survivors, and to bring its perpetrators to justice.

In the United States, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 provides an important framework for responding to human trafficking. Sadly, however, it has not been implemented in a fashion that effectively protects survivors or holds accountable nations that do not apprehend or prosecute traffickers. This legislation should be re-authorized, adequately funded, and aggressively implemented.⁷

Combined with these economic root causes is a demand in developed nations for the services of the sex trade and forced labor. Human trafficking will never be truly defeated without eliminating the consumerism that feeds it and prosecuting those actors in receiving countries, including our own, that benefit because of the exploitation of vulnerable human beings.

It is in this "supply and demand" global environment that human traffickers flourish, promising unsuspecting victims an opportunity to travel to a foreign land for employment and housing. At the end of the journey, they find coercion, abuse, entrapment, and exploitation in a brothel, a massage parlor, an illicit factory, or an agricultural outpost. By the time they are discovered, if ever, they are traumatized by physical, mental, and psychological abuse in the roles of prostitutes, domestic servants, or manual laborers. Many become ill with disease or become infected with HIV. Some lose their lives.

The federal government, in cooperation with state and local governments, should increase educational efforts so that all Americans become more aware of this problem. Similarly, emphasis should be placed on the recovery and care of victims and on providing them with legal protection and social services as soon as possible. This is particularly true for child trafficking victims, who are most susceptible to the long-term horrors of this crime.

We call upon Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform that would provide legal avenues for men, women, and their families to enter the country and work legally and safely. Undocumented persons eager to find work are easy prey for human traffickers.

The U.S. government must also work with foreign governments to eradicate human trafficking networks. Over the long term, the global community must work together to reduce the factors that make persons vulnerable to traffickers, such as the lack of economic opportunity in migrant-sending countries, especially for women.

Call to Action

As a global institution that is present in source nations as well as nations that serve as markets for human trafficking, the Catholic Church is well positioned to identify and rescue survivors of human trafficking. In fact, the Catholic Church provides important social services to survivors in the United States and around the world.

Much more must be done. Catholics in our own country can help, particularly by educating fellow Catholics and others about the realities of this crime. Parishes can serve as a

meeting place to discuss this issue and as a center for action to help identify survivors and provide them support.

We call upon all Catholics to seek ways to assist dioceses and local governments in helping survivors. Catholics can also help educate fellow Catholics and others about the human consequences of this crime.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING is a horrific crime against the basic dignity and rights of the human person.

Conclusion

It is hard to imagine that, in the twenty-first century, fellow human beings could be exploited and forced to work in the sex industry and other industries.

As Catholic bishops, we pledge to use the resources of the Church to help end this affliction. We also pledge to use our teaching authority to educate Catholics and others about human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a horrific crime against the basic dignity and rights of the human person. All efforts must be expended to end it. In the end, we must work together—Church, state, and community—to eliminate the root causes and markets that permit traffickers to flourish; to make whole the survivors of this crime; and to ensure that, one day soon, trafficking in human persons vanishes from the face of the earth.



Notes

- 1 Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 27, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (New York: America Press, 1966).
- 2 Pope John Paul II, Letter to Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran on the Occasion of the International Conference on "Twenty-First-Century Slavery—the Human Rights Dimension in Trafficking in Human Beings," May 15, 2002.
- 3 Archbishop Migliore, "Rescuing Women from Abuse," Statement to 3rd Committee of the 60th session of the UN General Assembly on the item "Implementation of the Outcome of the 4th World Conference on Women and of the Special Session of the General Assembly entitled 'Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace in the 21st Century,'" October 17, 2005.
- 4 Pope John Paul II, Letter to Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran.
- 5 Catholic Bishops of the United States and Mexico, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2003), no. 91.
- 6 Bishop Thomas Wenski, statement presented at the Press Conference on Launching of Anti-Trafficking Initiative in Central Florida, June 9, 2004.
- 7 The USCCB has consistently advocated for changes to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to better protect child victims of trafficking and to ensure that all victims are more readily identified and provided with care.

House Judiciary Committee

SB 2209

March 10, 2009

Chairman DeKrey and members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Kirstie Rose Dienert, speaking as a citizen. I am a junior at Bismarck High School and a member of the Third Wave. The Third Wave is an after-school club that focuses on women's issues. Human trafficking is of interest to this group because women tend to be the victims of human trafficking. I support Senate Bill 2209.

I strongly believe with the growing population in Bismarck, this bill will protect our at-risk populations, which include those below the age of 18 and those below the poverty line. According to the North Dakota census, 22.3 percent of the population is under the age of 18 and 11.8 percent lives below the poverty line.

As an agricultural state, another at risk population is the large number of migrant workers that are employed in North Dakota. Most of our immigrant workforce originates in Central and South America. According to the US State Department, the largest population of human trafficking victims comes from Vietnam, Mexico and El Salvador; therefore, North Dakota would seem to be at a greater risk of human trafficking.

North Dakota tends to be a state with low crime rates, but with the at risk populations, it could become an issue. Approximately 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year, with about 14,500 to 17,500 of them into the United States.

The United States does have a federal bill towards human trafficking of which bill 2209 is modeled after. The federal law protects the victim and punishes the criminal. Passing this bill will be a message to the criminals that human trafficking is unacceptable, and to the victims that they will be protected.

When I look around my high school and see many of my peers that could be at risk, I feel a great amount of initiative to help. As a young woman I am also fearful of sex trafficking among other women my age. Passing this bill would serve as protection for me and my peers.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of this bill. I urge a do pass to Senate Bill 2209. I will answer any questions.