



RICK GUNDRUM

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 58TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Assembly Bill 972

Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety | January 24, 2024 |
Room 415 NW

Chair Spiros, Vice-Chair Schutt, and members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 972. This bill comes out of the Speaker's Task Force on Human Trafficking. Since the National Human Trafficking Hotline was created in 2007, there have been 796 cases of human trafficking and 1,640 victims were identified in these cases.

In order to help counter the epidemic of human trafficking in Wisconsin, I have introduced legislation with Senator Dan Knodl to increase penalties for solicitation for prostitution. Currently, a person who intentionally solicits a person who is at least 18 to practice prostitution or establishes a person who is at least 18 in a place of prostitution is guilty of a Class H felony. This bill raises that penalty to a Class G felony. Under a bifurcated sentence, the maximum term of confinement in prison is five years followed by a maximum term of extended supervision of five years.

Additionally, this bill includes a mandatory minimum code of confinement in prison. That minimum term depends on the number of convictions for solicitation that the person has. We have also included the opportunity for the person to complete a treatment and education program approved by the court. The mandatory minimums are as follows:

- For a first offense, the mandatory minimum is either 6 months or, if the person completes the program, 3 months.
- For a second offense, the mandatory minimum is either 12 months or, if the offense follows the completion of the program, 9 months.
- For a third offense, the mandatory minimum is 2 years.
- For a fourth or subsequent offense, the mandatory minimum is 3 years.

Additionally, we hope to educate the public of these penalties by including them in a human trafficking poster designed by the Wisconsin Department of Justice. I want to thank the committee again for having a public hearing today and I am happy to take questions.



JERRY L. O'CONNOR

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 52nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 267-9152

Toll-Free: (888) 529-0052

Rep.O'Connor@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8953

Madison, WI 53708-8953

Testimony for the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Assembly Bill 972

Relating to: solicitation for prostitution and providing a penalty

Wednesday January 24, 2024

Thank you to the Committee Chair and committee members for allowing us this opportunity to address the background for this bill.

Human trafficking is a global crisis. It affects countless lives, including many individuals right here in Wisconsin. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, since the program's inception in 2007, Wisconsin has had 796 human-tracking cases involving 1,640 victims. While those statistics are striking, a 2019 DOJ study found that sex-trafficking data is under-reported, so the true number of victims is likely much higher.

As Chair of the Speaker's Task Force on Human Trafficking, I would like to share a few thoughts on this bill. This bill is a product of the hearings held during the past four months where our Human Trafficking Task Force attempted to better understand how trafficking is affecting our society, especially young people. We learned from agency representatives, DOJ, County DA offices, multiple speakers from local law enforcement, and not-for-profit victim support organizations what a challenge it is to turn the tide of human trafficking in Wisconsin.

This exercise gave us a clear pathway to several bills we could introduce that would have an effective influence and help reduce the level of sex and child sex trafficking in Wisconsin. This is one of those bills and the Task Force recommends it for passage.

One of the reasons sex trafficking can flourish is that the current penalties are often less than the cost of the solicitation. If the consequences of dehumanizing a victim of sex trafficking are negligible, then sex trafficking will not be reduced. If we are committed to changing the dynamic of sex trafficking, then the consequences need to match the damage rendered to the victims of sex trafficking.

AB 972 guarantees that an individual convicted of soliciting a prostitute will have to serve a mandatory minimum prison term, with the duration depending on the number of convictions. This bill increases the penalty for someone who intentionally solicits a prostitute to a Class G felony, which is punishable by up to 10 years in prison. Furthermore, AB 972 provides a means for the solicitor to get help through sex addiction education courses and gain a reduction to the minimum mandatory sentence.

Addressing human trafficking requires a comprehensive strategy, and a crucial component of this strategy involves holding individuals involved in human trafficking accountable for their actions.



Wisconsin Family Council
Church Ambassador Network
PO Box 14440 • Madison WI 53708
608-256-3228 (Madison) • 888-378-7395 (toll-free)
info@wifamilycouncil.org • www.wifamilycouncil.org



WFC Church Ambassador Network Testimony
Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice
Assembly Bills 971, 972, and 979
Wednesday, January 24, 2024

Thank you, Chairman Spiros, for holding today's hearing on the important topic of human trafficking. My name is Dave Lingle, and I serve as a Church Ambassador with the Church Ambassador Network of Wisconsin Family Council. I am providing testimony on behalf of Daniel Degner, the Director of the Church Ambassador Network of Wisconsin Family Council, who unfortunately couldn't join us today. We are testifying today for information only.

The Church Ambassador Network's mission is to inspire the church to engage government for the advancement of God's Kingdom. We accomplish this by connecting the shepherds of the church who are pastors to the shepherds of government to minister to governing authorities as a person, shepherd, and community partner. Today, we look to pour into you as a shepherd and leader by highlighting how our human trafficking and pornography white papers can be a resource for you as you work through AB 979, AB 972, and AB 971.

We are not lobbyists and will not take a position on any of these bills; however, today's testimony will serve as information on what Scripture says regarding the principles behind these bills and issues, as well as highlight how local churches and parachurch ministries can be a partner to help combat human trafficking.

I will highlight a few biblical principles that speak to the bills before you today.

First, God wants us to rescue people from physical darkness and ultimately bring eternal healing. While physical relief and emotional aftercare for victims are important, we also want to offer them holistic, eternal healing found only in Christ. We are thankful for the work of the Speaker's Task Force on Human Trafficking that helps address the physical needs of those who have been trafficked; however, victims need holistic healing found through physical and spiritual life found in a relationship with Christ and support from local churches and parachurch ministries.

Second, God commands leaders to defend those who can't defend themselves. Victims of human trafficking are often voiceless and unable to help themselves due to force, fraud, or coercion. It will take all of God's institutions—the family, the church, and government—to push back darkness and bring restoration to victims and punishment to the oppressors.

Third, the law is a tool and a guide to protect people from bondage and addictions. The law should punish evil. The law cannot save people, nor can it eliminate wrong behavior. The law should be, however, part of the solution. Laws will never completely eradicate addictions and bondage, but they can guide people away from and protect them from addictions and bondage.

Last, the Gospel isn't just for the oppressed, but for the oppressor as well. The apostle Paul himself was an oppressor and murderer of Christians before his conversion. The gospel, which is the message that one can be reconciled to God through faith in Christ, transformed Paul's life. Originally an oppressor of Christians he became one of the most influential Christians of all time. We believe the gospel can still transform the lives of oppressors today, whether it be a solicitor or a trafficker.

The Church Ambassador Network white paper on human trafficking highlights four ministries combatting human trafficking. We are thankful for the potential partnership with the State of Wisconsin with parachurch ministries such as Inner Beauty Center, Zeteo Community, Abolition Wisconsin, and Damascus Road Project.

Regarding AB 979: We are thankful that this bill acknowledges the need to partner with non-profit organizations combatting human trafficking with government. We hope that if passed AB 979 would allow for parachurch ministries that advance the gospel to have equal access to the potential grants.

Regarding AB 972: Our white papers found extensive links between pornography usage and an increased demand for solicitation. Pornography and sex addictions are driving the demand for human trafficking in Wisconsin. Daniel Degner leads a ministry at his local church that helps men break free from pornography and sex addiction. Daniel has personally seen how ministries targeted at men with pornography and sex addictions have helped men receive victory from solicitation. Our Church Ambassador Network Pastoral Advisory Council, comprised of denominational leaders from around the state, found a need for the legislature to incentivize pornography and sex addiction treatment to those arrested for solicitation and a need to create harsh criminal punishments for repeat sex buyers. We do not have a position on this bill; however, we do appreciate the values introduced in the bill. Our hope is that if passed, ministries such as the one Daniel leads could be used for those charged under the bill.

Regarding AB 971: We are thankful that this bill is seeking to better defend those who have physical or mental conditions that may make them more susceptible of falling into the trap of human trafficking through force, fraud, or coercion.

Thank you again for hearing our testimony today. It is an honor to minister to each of you as a person, shepherd, and as a partner. If you have any questions or would like to schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss this issue further, please reach out to our Church Ambassador Network Director, Daniel Degner. Thank you for your time.

Follow-up questions or meetings can be sent or scheduled with Daniel Degner via email at ddegner@wifamilycouncil.org or by call/text at 920-204-4447.



Combating Human Trafficking



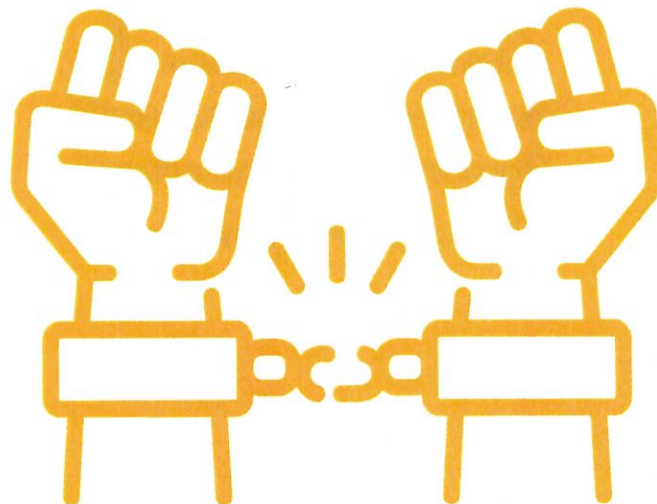


THE BONDAGE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In the Church Ambassador Network, a ministry of Wisconsin Family Council, we work to free people from bondage, defined as being captured, unable to escape from circumstance or behavior. Many behaviors in our culture may begin as a choice (for some, they may not have had a choice) but become addictions that lead to bondage. Human trafficking, for example, leads many into literal bondage. Human trafficking impacts boys, girls, women, and men within Wisconsin.

While human trafficking encompasses both labor and sex, for this paper, when referencing human trafficking, we are speaking of sex trafficking. Sex trafficking is defined, but not limited to, the action or practice of an individual being sexually exploited by using force, fraud, or coercion to obtain/provide sexual activity (not always for pay). We recognize the distinction between prostitution and sex trafficking. While prostitution encompasses a willingness to work and generate income, sex trafficking is someone in bondage against their will.

The Church Ambassador Network seeks to come alongside the leaders in the State of Wisconsin to help people break free from this bondage, as well as prevent individuals from being exploited as a commodity in the sex trade.





HUMAN TRAFFICKING'S IMPACT ON WISCONSIN

While drugs or other illegal materials can be sold only once, sadly, a person can be sold for sex countless times against their will. Although multiple organizations work to end human trafficking and provide statistics regarding the issue, it is still difficult to determine the exact number of victims in order to understand the scope and pervasiveness of the problem in Wisconsin.

1,000 - 1,500
Total number of online ads over a typical weekend advertising women for sale in Dane County alone (1)

72
Human trafficking occurs in every county in Wisconsin. (4)

1 out of 4
victims are children (5)

Where Sex Trafficking Happens

- Gas stations
- Hotels
- Street Exploitation
- Escort Services
- Truck Stops & Convenience Stores
- On-Line Exploitation Websites
- Social Media
- Exotic Dancing/Strip Clubs
- Private Parties
- Gang and Organized Crime-Based Exploitation
- Familial Pimping (parent, step-parent, sibling, cousin)
- Pornography
- Massage Parlors

(6)

Milwaukee is one of the top ten worst cities for sex trafficking in the U.S. (3)

84% of traffickers advertize online or utilize social media to recruit. (2)



HUMAN TRAFFICKING'S IMPACT IN THE UNITED STATES

16,554

likely victims identified in
2021 alone

(7)

Human
trafficking
generates
more than
\$150 billion
annually.

(9)

**Every
30
seconds**

someone becomes a
victim of sex trafficking.

(8)



The U.S. leads
all nations in
commercial sex
consumption.

(10)



PORNOGRAPHY'S IMPACT ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

1 in 5 girls, and 1 in 10 boys ages 13-17 have shared a nude picture via sexting. Pictures are often shared without consent.



(11)

Porn and sex trafficking are inseparably linked. Porn fuels the demand for trafficking.

(12)

Porn grooms men to become consumers of women, thereby fueling the demand for paid sex.

(13)

Mainstream porn sites are filled with actual footage of the rape of sex trafficking victims, no matter how "consensual" it may appear.

(14)

Children growing up in homes where pornography is regularly consumed are far more likely to be trafficked.

(15)



HUMAN TRAFFICKING'S CONSEQUENCES

Human trafficking negatively impacts individuals at a personal level and communities at a societal level.

Creates long-lasting trauma for victims

People were meant to be loved; things were meant to be used. The reason there is so much chaos in the world is because things are being loved, and people are being used.

Reduces Empathy

Research suggests that frequent porn consumers are less likely to intervene during a sexual assault.

(16)

People are not property

Drugs can only be sold once, but a person can be sold over and over.

No one should be bought or traded as a commodity.



BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

GOD WANTS US TO RESCUE PEOPLE FROM PHYSICAL DARKNESS, AND ULTIMATELY BRING ETERNAL HEALING.

While physical relief and emotional aftercare for victims are important, we also want to offer them holistic, eternal healing found only in Christ. Not just bread, but the Bread of Life. Not just water, but Living Water. Apart from Christ, a victim and an oppressor, just like any of us, are dead in their sins. It is only by grace through faith in Christ that rescues any of us eternally.



That you may declare the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:9b



He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 1 Peter 2:24

GOD COMMANDS LEADERS TO DEFEND THOSE WHO CAN'T DEFEND THEMSELVES.

Victims of human trafficking are often voiceless and unable to help themselves due to force, fraud, or coercion. This injustice is not something that will go away on its own. It will take all of us, the family, the church, and the government to push back the darkness and bring restoration to the victims and punishment to the oppressors.



Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:8-9

Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. Psalm 82:3-4



GOD IS THE CREATOR OF MEN, WOMEN, AND SEX. HE DECLARED IT VERY GOOD, BUT SIN DISTORTS WHAT IS GOOD.

Men and women were made in God's image for a relationship with Him and with each other. They were made to worship and know Him. God created sex to be enjoyed by one man and one woman within the covenant of marriage. However, Adam's sin of disobedience in the garden of Eden brought dysfunction to everything meant for good. Human trafficking is evil and is a result of Adam's sin in the garden.



Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. Genesis 2:24-25

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned. Romans 5:12

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS A GOSPEL ISSUE

We are all powerless to save ourselves spiritually and need someone to come to our rescue. Jesus stood in the gap for us when we were powerless. Jesus took our sins and our place on the cross even though He was sinless and blameless. Jesus came to save all who are lost, not because we are deserving, but because He is rich in mercy. All who repent and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ will be saved.



For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Romans 5:6

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21

THE LAW IS A TOOL AND A GUIDE TO PROTECT PEOPLE FROM BONDAGE AND ADDICTIONS. THE LAW SHOULD PUNISH EVIL.

The law cannot save people, nor can it eliminate wrong behavior. The law is not, and cannot be, the final solution. However, it must be a part of the solution. The law is a tool to serve and assist people for generations. Laws will never eradicate addictions, but they can guide people away from addictions and protect them from those who desire to make them addicted. Laws must continue to be used as tools to help people break free from addictions, and more importantly, protect them from ever getting addicted.



So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. Galatians 3:24



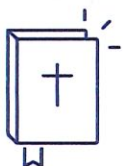
What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."
Romans 7:7

THE GOSPEL ISN'T JUST FOR THE OPPRESSED, BUT FOR THE OPPRESSOR AS WELL.

Before Paul preached the gospel, which is the message that one can be reconciled to God through faith in Christ, Paul persecuted, oppressed, and murdered Christians. If a murderer like Paul could be converted, God's grace can also extend to the worst of the worst. All have broken God's laws and fallen short of the glory of God, including those who are oppressors in sex trafficking.



But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord...
Acts 9:1

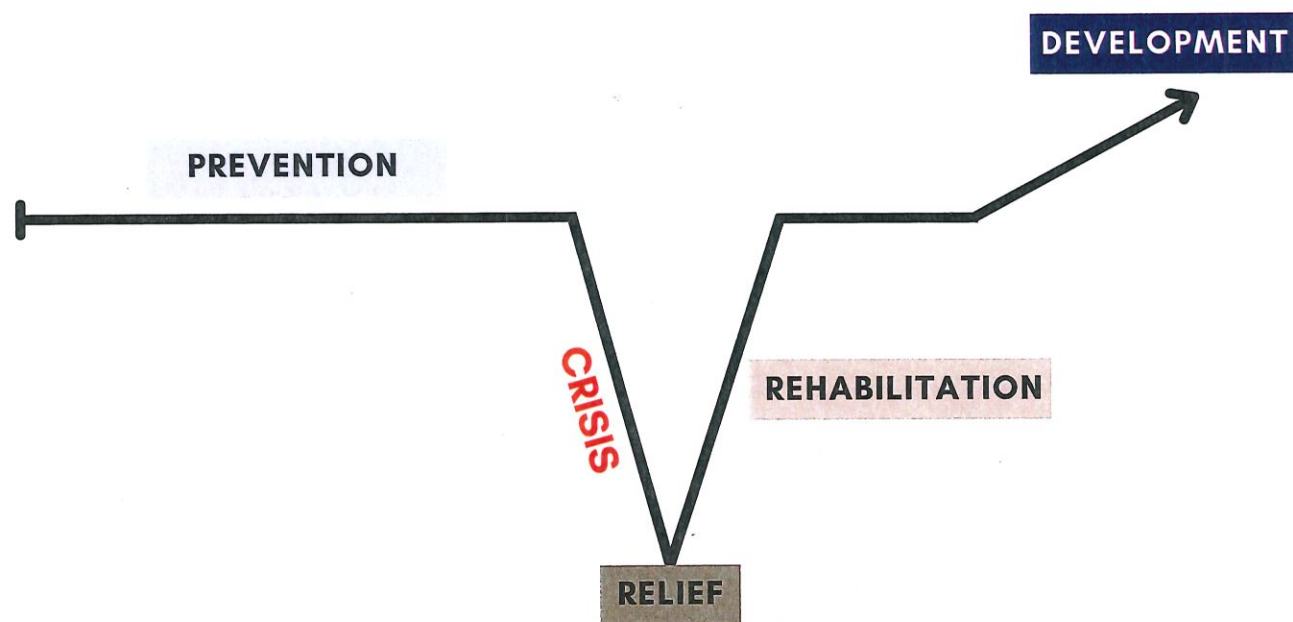


The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.
1 Timothy 1:15



COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

All bondage eventually ends in a spiritual death. Bondage takes way more from someone than they could ever imagine. Human trafficking is no different. Human trafficking negatively impacts individuals, families, and communities. To break this bondage, it is essential that our strategies, in the home, the church, and the government, take a cooperative and comprehensive approach as illustrated below.



PREVENTION

Stopping potential crisis or trauma

RELIEF

Urgent and temporary provision of emergency aid to reduce immediate suffering

REHABILITATION

Restore people and their communities to positive elements of their pre-crisis conditions

DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing change that moves people closer to being in right relationship with God and others.



MINISTRIES COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking takes someone made in the image of God and reduces them to a commodity. For the men who are perpetrators, it ravages their relationships beginning with themselves and overflowing into others. In order to break this bondage, we need churches and governments to follow a holistic approach to combating human trafficking, following the example of the ministries below.



Located in Milwaukee, Inner Beauty Center exists to help the sexually exploited discover their value and purpose. They reach into the community, meet personal needs, build trusted relationships, and walk alongside their clients through the recovery and restoration journey.



Based in Madison, Zeteo Community exists to serve women who have been sexually exploited, and their children, by providing residential living and programming, and a supportive community in which they are free to dream and thrive.



Abolition Wisconsin is a Dane County ministry that disrupts demand with buyers at the point of sale online. They connect buyers who ask for help with local resources to help them break out of pornography and sex addiction.



Based out of Oshkosh, Damascus Road Project educates, locates, and advocates for the end of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. This ministry works to rescue and restore women exploited by sex trafficking.



WHAT CAN THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OF WISCONSIN DO?

Attack the Demand

Many consumers of human trafficking became addicted to pornography at a young age. Create protections aimed at preventing pornography addiction among minors.

Proper Training for 1st Responders

Recognize warning signs and also the difference between prostitution and sex trafficking.

Curriculum in Public Schools

Help students see the dangers and warning signs of this nightmare.



WHAT CAN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF WISCONSIN DO?

Study

COMMISSION A STUDY ON SEX TRAFFICKING IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN.

Prevent

CREATE A SEX TRAFFICKING PREVENTION PROGRAM THAT EDUCATES MINORS ON THE DANGERS AND WARNING SIGNS OF THIS GROWING PROBLEM. WE LEARNED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PREVENTATIVE EDUCATION WITH CIGARETTES.

Rehabilitate

REFER VICTIMS IMPACTED BY HUMAN TRAFFICKING TO MINISTRIES THAT PROVIDE HOLISTIC CARE.

Recognize

RECOGNIZE THE GROWING ADDICTION TO PORNOGRAPHY THAT FUELS SEX TRAFFICKING BY SIGNING A PROCLAMATION DECLARING PORNOGRAPHY A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS. ALSO, ESTABLISH AN ANNUAL STATEWIDE HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS DAY.



WHAT CAN CHURCHES DO?

A goal of the Church Ambassador Network is to raise awareness of the sex trafficking epidemic. Sex trafficking is a gospel issue because we remember that while we were weak, ungodly, sinners, and enemies of God, Christ died for us. Christ stood in the gap for us when we could not save ourselves. God calls faithful Christians to stop this injustice and offer the transformative power of the gospel.

Welcome

CHURCHES CAN WELCOME AND SHOW GRACE TO WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH AWFUL CIRCUMSTANCES. WE CAN REMIND OURSELVES OF THE GRACE THE LORD HAS SHOWN TO US AS WELL.



For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. 1 Corinthians 1:26-28

...And such were some of you. 1 Corinthians 6:11

Partner

PARTNER WITH LOCAL GOSPEL-CENTERED ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE FIGHTING TO COMBAT SEX TRAFFICKING. VOLUNTEERING, DONATING TO THEM, PRAYING FOR THEM, AND RAISING AWARENESS ON SOCIAL MEDIA ARE ALL GREAT WAYS TO DO THIS. PRAYING ALSO FOR OPPRESSORS TO REPENT.



I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Philippians 1:3-5



Disciple

FAMILIES AND CHURCHES SHOULD BEGIN HAVING AGE-APPROPRIATE CONVERSATIONS WITH CHILDREN ABOUT BIBLICAL SEXUALITY. HELP YOUNG PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THAT SEX IS BEAUTIFUL IN ITS PROPER CONTEXT— BETWEEN ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN IN A COVENANT MARRIAGE, BECOMING ONE FLESH FOR ONE LIFETIME.



Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. Genesis 2:24-25

CITATIONS

1. Dane County Sheriff's Office - WI. Email dated 12/13/2023.
2. damascusroadproject.org/sex-trafficking
3. Sarah Fandler, [Exploitnomore.org](https://exploitnomore.org). November 2023.
4. damascusroadproject.org/wisconsin-sex-trafficking
5. U.S. Customs and Border Protection - cbp.gov/border-security/human-trafficking. August 23, 2023.
6. Lisa Sennholz, damascusroadproject.org/sex-trafficking
7. Polaris Project Analysis of 2021 Data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline
8. President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. "Building Partnerships to Eradicate Modern-Day Slavery: Report of Recommendations to the President." [Washington, D.C.], 2013.
9. U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "Countering Human Trafficking: Year in Review 2020-2021 Report"
10. Fight The New Drug. fightthenewdrug.org/report-the-us-is-one-of-the-biggest-consumers-of-sexual-exploitation-in-the-world/. January 2, 2020.
11. Thorn - "Self-Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material: Attitudes and Experiences." August 2020.
12. Fight The New Drug, fightthenewdrug.org/sex-trafficking-and-porn-overlap/. December 8, 2021.
13. Brian Doty, Abolition Wisconsin.org, 2023.
14. Fight The New Drug, fightthenewdrug.org/sex-trafficking-and-porn-overlap/. December 8, 2021.
15. Ibid, fightthenewdrug.org/how-porn-fuels-sex-trafficking/. May 15, 2021.
16. Foubert, J. D., & Bridges, A. J. (2017). "What Is the Attraction? Pornography Use Motives in Relation to Bystander Intervention." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 32(20), 3071-3089. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515596538>



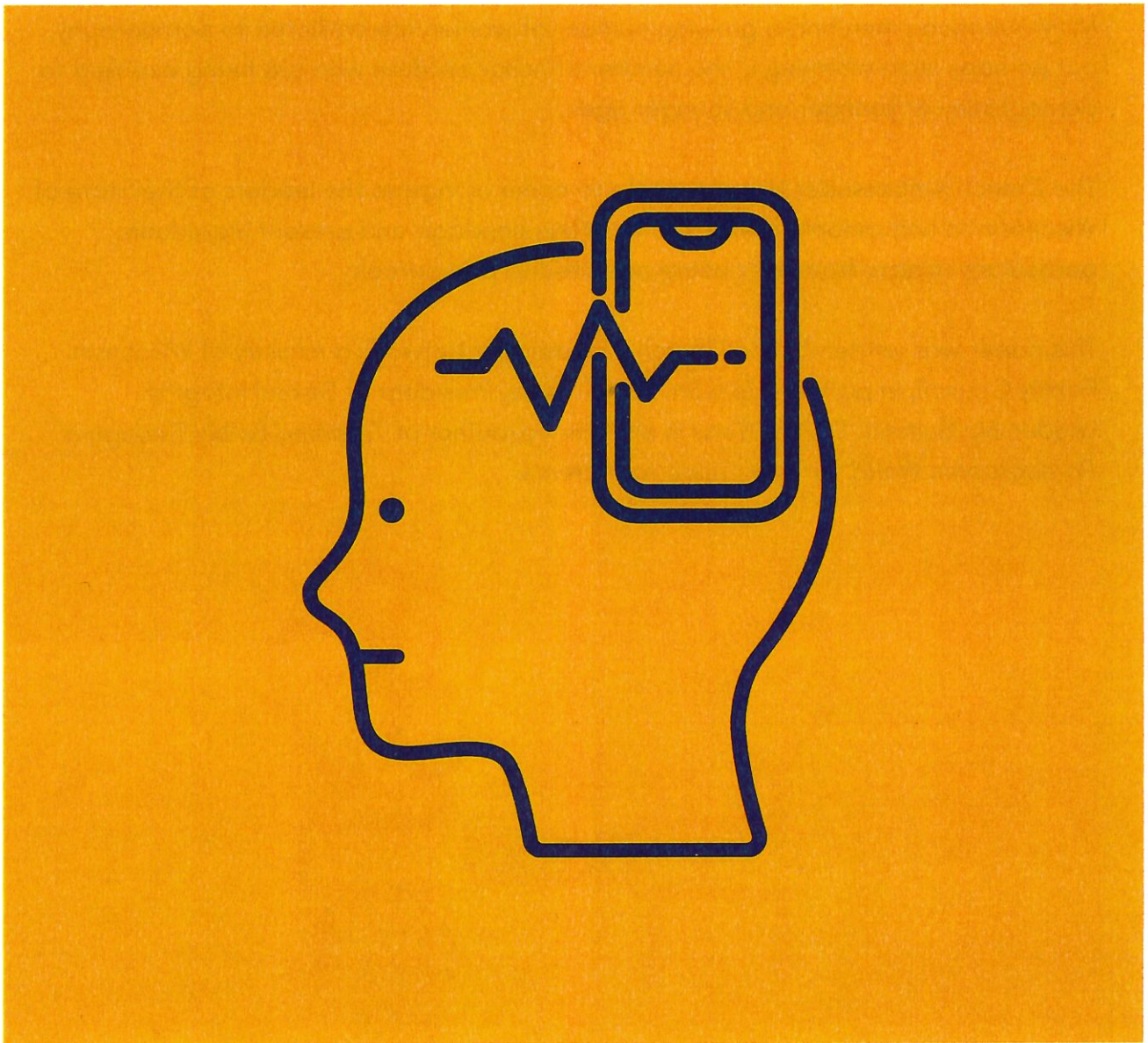
CHURCH AMBASSADOR NETWORK
AN INITIATIVE OF
WISCONSIN FAMILY COUNCIL



PO Box 14440, Madison, WI 53708 ● (608) 256-3228
info@wifamilycouncil.org ● www.wifamilycouncil.org



The Pornography Epidemic





THE BONDAGE OF PORNORGAPHY

The Church Ambassador Network, a ministry of Wisconsin Family Council, desires to see people freed from bondage, which we define as being captured, unable to escape, from circumstance or behavior. Many behaviors in our culture may begin as a choice but become addictions that lead to bondage. Pornography leads many into bondage. Many American men and a growing number of women are addicted to pornography, but perhaps most alarming is the number of minor children who are being exposed to pornography at younger and younger ages.

The Church Ambassador Network seeks to come alongside the leaders of the State of Wisconsin to help people break free from this bondage and prevent individuals, particularly minors, from ever being addicted to pornography.

This paper was written by the Church Ambassador Network, a ministry of Wisconsin Family Council, in partnership with Daniel Weiss, President of Sexual Integrity Leadership Summit. Daniel Weiss is also the co-author of *Treading Boldly Through a Pornographic World: A Field Guide for Parents*.





PORNOGRAPHY HARMS YOUNG PEOPLE

With 84% of teenagers owning a smartphone and 53% of youth owning a smartphone by age 11, it is not a matter of *if* our youth will be exposed to pornography, but *when*. Early exposure to pornography profoundly misshapes teens' understanding of sexuality, relationships, love, marriage, and family.

TEENS THAT VIEW PORNOGRAPHY ARE...

- Less interested in getting married.
- Less likely to be faithful to one's spouse.
- Less interested in starting a family.
- More likely to view sex as a commodity.
- More likely to engage in harmful sexual behaviors, among many other harms.

(1)

88%

OF PORN VIDEOS CONTAIN PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

(4)

49%

OF PORN VIDEOS CONTAIN VERBAL AGGRESSION TOWARD WOMEN

(5)

79%

OF TEENS AGES 13-17 HAVE ENCOUNTERED PORN WITHOUT LOOKING FOR IT.

(2)

1/2

OF PARENTS OF 14-18-YEAR-OLDS ARE UNAWARE THEIR KIDS HAVE SEEN PORNOGRAPHY.

(3)



"A teen's brain is at its peak of dopamine production and neuroplasticity, making it highly vulnerable to addiction and rewiring as their brain is not yet finished developing."

(6)



PORNOGRAPHY HARMS OUR CULTURE

With the creation of the internet, pornography has become extremely accessible, widespread, and very difficult to regulate.

PORNOGRAPHY USE AND SEXUAL AGGRESSION

"22 STUDIES FROM 7 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES WERE ANALYZED. CONSUMPTION WAS ASSOCIATED WITH SEXUAL AGGRESSION IN THE US AND INTERNATIONALLY AMONG MALES AND FEMALES, AND IN CROSS-SECTIONAL AND LONGITUDINAL STUDIES. ASSOCIATIONS WERE STRONGER FOR VERBAL THAN PHYSICAL SEXUAL AGGRESSION ALTHOUGH BOTH WERE SIGNIFICANT."

(7)

PORNOGRAPHY AND CRIME

NEWPORT NEWS, VA., DISCOVERED THAT AREAS WITH SEX BUSINESSES HAD 57% MORE POLICE CALLS AND 40% MORE CRIMES THAN A CONTROL AREA.

(8)

AUSTIN, TEXAS, FOUND THAT THE NUMBER OF SEX CRIMES EXCEEDED THE CITY AVERAGE BY 177% TO 482% IN FOUR STUDY AREAS WITH SEX BUSINESSES.

(9)

PORNOGRAPHY AND PROSTITUTION

"A STUDY OF 6,048 SWEDISH MEN FOUND THAT FREQUENT PORNOGRAPHY USERS WERE 3 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO PAY FOR SEX, SHOWING HOW PORNOGRAPHY USE DRIVES DEMAND FOR PROSTITUTION."

(10)



PORNOGRAPHY HARMES OUR CHURCHES

68%

OF PASTORS "AGREE STRONGLY" THAT THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH SHOULD HELP PEOPLE DEAL WITH PERSONAL SEXUAL CHALLENGES

(11)

73%

OF PASTORS SURVEYED WERE APPROACHED BY MEMBERS WITH PORNOGRAPHY-RELATED STRUGGLES IN THE PAST YEAR

(12)

7%

OF CHURCHES HAVE A MINISTRY FOR THOSE ADDICTED TO PORNOGRAPHY

(13)

14%

OF SENIOR PASTORS CURRENTLY ACCESS PORNOGRAPHY

21%

OF YOUTH PASTORS CURRENTLY ACCESS PORNOGRAPHY

(14)

% OF PASTORS FEELING "VERY QUALIFIED" TO ADDRESS PORN USE BY...

- **A HUSBAND: 26%**
- **A TEEN: 21%**
- **UNMARRIED ADULTS: 25%**
- **A WIFE: 9%**

(15)



PORNOGRAPHY HARMS THE BRAIN

In 2022, the World Health Organization added "compulsive sexual behavior" to its list of impulse control disorders, which includes habitual pornography. Research continues to demonstrate vast neurochemical changes to the porn viewer's brain health and functionality.

Impact on the Brain

CHEMICALS

Pornography causes the release in the brain of pleasure chemicals like dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and epinephrine.

REWIRING

The brain rewires itself to accommodate the extra chemicals.

Frontal Lobes

The area of the brain responsible for making decisions and logically thinking through situations and scenarios is the part of the brain most affected by addiction.

DEPENDENCY

The body builds up a tolerance to and a dependency on the chemicals. The brain goes from wanting the pleasure chemicals to needing them. (16)

"PORNOGRAPHY MAY BE JUST SUCH A SUPERNORMAL STIMULUS. WITH PORNOGRAPHY USE, MUCH MORE OF A NORMAL STIMULUS MAY EVENTUALLY BE NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE RESPONSE A SUPERNORMAL STIMULUS EVOKES."

(17)

21%

OF YOUNG MEN, SAID THEY VIEW PORNOGRAPHIC MATERIAL EVERY DAY OR ALMOST EVERY DAY

(18)



PORNOGRAPHY'S CONSEQUENCES

All bondage eventually ends in a spiritual death. Bondage takes more from a person than he or she ever imagines. Pornography is no different. Pornography ravages relationships, beginning with the individual and overflowing into others.

Destroys Relationships & Marriages

RESEARCH CONSISTENTLY SHOWS THAT PORN CONSUMERS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO LATER EXPERIENCE DIVORCE OR BREAKUP—EVEN AFTER CONTROLLING FOR MARITAL HAPPINESS, SEXUAL SATISFACTION, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.

(19)

Impacts More Than The User

WOMEN WHOSE PARTNERS CONSUME PORNOGRAPHY TEND TO EXPERIENCE MORE PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS, FEEL MORE OBJECTIFIED, HAVE POORER BODY IMAGE, AND ARE EVEN MORE LIKELY TO DEVELOP EATING DISORDER SYMPTOMS.

(20)

Hurts Mental Health

STUDIES SHOW THAT PORNOGRAPHY INCREASES THE DESIRE FOR SUICIDE, LOWERS SELF-ESTEEM, INCREASES LONELINESS, AS WELL AS DECREASES OVERALL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.

(21)



BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF BONDAGE & ADDICTIONS

ADDICTIONS PROMISE LIFE AND ENTERTAINMENT, BUT END ONLY IN BONDAGE AND LOSS OF CONTROL OF ONE'S OWN LIFE

All addictions start the same. They promise life and entertainment, and at first, they deliver on that promise. A person wants to go back. They want to bring their friends. It may appear innocent and cheap at first. It begins as a choice. Overtime, that initial choice becomes an addiction. A person may desire to quit, but can't. They keep going back, even against their own will. It is no longer entertaining, life-giving, or cheap. It will now cost them everything. It will cost them their time, resources, physical health, and relationships.



Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."
John 8:34-36

COSTLY FOR INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, & COMMUNITIES

Addictions don't come only at a financial or time cost. They come at great relational cost. Addicts over time lose marriages, parental rights, and friendships. Those costs that were once only personal costs now come at a great cost to the family and the community.



But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. James 1:14-15



REQUIRES A BROKEN HEART & INTERVENTION TO BE SET FREE

It is very difficult to help someone who doesn't want help or doesn't desire to change. In the Bible, salvation follows repentance and recognition of the need for a Savior. Repentance is a complete change of mind. Repentance demands extreme action. It is recognizing that one has done wrong and wants to do what is right. If someone is going to be set free from their addiction, they must have a humble, repentant spirit with a desire to change.



If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

THE LAW IS A TOOL & A GUIDE TO PROTECT PEOPLE FROM BONDAGE & ADDICTIONS

The law cannot save people, nor can it eliminate wrong behavior. The law is not, and cannot be, the final solution. However, it must be a part of the solution. The law is a tool to serve and assist people for generations. Laws will never eradicate addictions, but they can guide people away from addictions and protect them from those who desire to make them addicted. Laws must continue to be used as tools to help people break free from addictions, and more importantly, protect them from ever getting addicted.



So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. Galatians 3:24



What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." Romans 7:7



OPPRESSORS WANT TO KEEP PEOPLE IN BONDAGE

Oppression is when someone is intentionally using power and authority to keep someone under their control. Profit can be made off someone who is addicted. They are a guaranteed repeat customer who does not require clever marketing or good service to maintain. Sell them once, and then you have them for life. Companies or individuals who make money off products that cause addiction have a vested interest in keeping people addicted.



"Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause." Isaiah 1:17



"Whoever oppresses the poor to increase his own wealth, or gives to the rich, will only come to poverty." Proverbs 22:16



HOW THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH CAN HELP

Prevent

- Create safeguards to protect minors from accessing pornography.
- Adopt human growth and development curriculum standards to include the harms of pornography.

Treat

- Encourage insurance companies to recognize compulsive sexual disorders as detailed in the global diagnostic tool ICD-11 and fund recovery treatment consistent with this diagnosis.
- Incentivize pornography and sex addiction treatment to those arrested for solicitation.

Punish

- Create harsh criminal penalties for repeat sex buyers and sex traffickers to curtail the demand for prostitution and reduce sex trafficking in the state.
- Punish online companies that allow minors to access pornography.



HOW THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH CAN HELP

Study

COMMISSION A STUDY ON PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

Prevent

CREATE A PORNOGRAPHY PREVENTION CAMPAIGN THAT EDUCATES MINORS ON THE HARM OF PORNOGRAPHY AND HOW TO SAY NO WHEN THEY SEE IT ON THE INTERNET. WE LEARNED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PREVENTATIVE EDUCATION WITH CIGARETTES.

Treat

ADD PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION TO THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES DISEASES AND CONDITIONS LIST

Recognize

JOIN THE 16 OTHER STATES THAT HAVE STUDIED THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF PORNOGRAPHY AND DECLARED IT TO BE A PUBLIC HEALTH HAZARD. SUCH AN ACTION OPENS OPPORTUNITIES FOR OTHER NEEDED POLICY REFORMS.



HOW CHURCHES CAN HELP

Educate

BOLDLY AND COMPASSIONATELY ADDRESS THE INFLUENCE OF PORNOGRAPHY ON INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND ALL OF SOCIETY. RECOGNIZE PORNOGRAPHY AS A SOCIAL CONTAGION IMPACTING ALL OF US AND ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSION IN HOMES, WITH CHILDREN, IN BIBLE STUDIES, SMALL GROUPS, AND OTHER SAFE PLACES. IMPLEMENT TITUS 2 PRINCIPLES OF DISCIPLESHIP BY HAVING OLDER MEN AND WOMEN DISCIPLE YOUNGER PEOPLE ON THIS ISSUE.



Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible....

Ephesians 5:11-13

Support

CREATE A CULTURE OF CONFESSION, REPENTANCE, AND LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE STRUGGLING WITH PORNOGRAPHY USE AND OTHER SEXUAL BROKENNESS. REMOVE SHAME AND ENCOURAGE OPENNESS AND SAFETY FOR THOSE HIDING IN THE SHADOWS.



If he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

James 5:15b-16



Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Philippians 4:8



Collaborate

IDENTIFY LOCAL AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, PROFESSIONALS, AND RESOURCES THAT CAN AID CHURCHES IN ADDRESSING THE HARMS OF PORNOGRAPHY AND IN CREATING A SAFE PROCESS FOR CONFESSION AND HEALING. OFFER SPOUSE CARE AND OTHER COMMUNITIES OF CONFIDENTIAL AND TRUSTED CARE.

CITATIONS

1. Jill C. Manning, "The Impact of Internet Pornography on Marriage and the Family: A Review of the Research." *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity* 13, no. 2-3 (February 24, 2007): 131-65, 146
2. Josh McDowell, *The Porn Phenomenon*, 2016, 41
3. Maggie Jones, "What Teenagers are Learning from Online Porn," *New York Times*, February 7, 2008
4. Ana J. Bridges et al. "Aggression and Sexual Behavior in Best-Selling Pornography Videos: A Content Analysis Update," *Violence against Women* 16, no 10 (October 16, 2010): 1065-85.
5. Ibid. Bridges
6. Gary Wilson, YourBrainOnPorn.com
7. Paul J Wright, Robert S. Tokunaga, Ashley Kraus "A Meta-Analysis of Pornography Consumption and Actual Acts of Sexual Aggression in General Population Studies" (December 29, 2015)
8. "Adult Use Study," Newport News Department of Planning and Development, March 1996, (February 4, 2011)
9. "Report on Adult Oriented Businesses in Austin," Office of Land Development Services, May 19, 1986, (February 4, 2011).
10. Charlotte Deogan et al. "Are Men Who Buy Sex Different from Men Who Do Not?: Exploring Sex Life Characteristics Based on a Randomized Population Survey in Sweden," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* (2020), doi:10.1007/s10508-020-01843-3.
11. Daniel Weiss, "*Sexuality and the Church in America 1: Are Pastors Responding to Sexual Challenges within the Church?*"
12. Ibid. Weiss
13. Josh McDowell, "The Porn Phenomenon" 2016, 115
14. Ibid, McDowell, 80
15. Ibid, Weiss
16. Fightthenewdrug.org and Josh McDowell Ministries
17. Drs. John and Julie Gottman, [An Open Letter on Porn](#)
18. Jason S. Carroll, Laura M. Padilla-Walker, Larry J Nelson, Chad D. Olson, Carolyn McNamara Barry, and Stephanie D. Madsen, "Generation XXX: Pornography acceptance and use among emerging adults." *Journal of Adolescent Research* 23 (2008): 6-30.
19. Perry, S.L (2018). "Pornography use and marital separation: Evidence from two-wave panel data."
20. Tylka, T.L., & Kroon Van Diest, A.M. (2015). *You Looking at Her "Hot" Body May Not be "Cool" for Me: Integrating Male Partners.*
21. Brown, C.C., Durtschi, J.A, Carroll, J.S., & Willoughby, B.J. (2017). *Understanding and predicting classes of college students who use pornography.*



CHURCH AMBASSADOR NETWORK
AN INITIATIVE OF
WISCONSIN FAMILY COUNCIL

PO Box 14440, Madison, WI 53708 • (608) 256-3228
info@wifamilycouncil.org • www.wifamilycouncil.org



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Members, Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Members, Committee on Workforce Development & Economic Opportunities
Members, Committee on Jobs, Economy, and Small Business

FROM: David Earleywine, Associate Director

DATE: January 24, 2024

RE: Support for AB-970, AB-971, AB972, AB-973, AB-974, AB-976, AB-978,
AB-979, AB-980, AB-981, Human Trafficking

On behalf of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the bishops of Wisconsin, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the following bills being heard in this and other Assembly committees today:

AB-970, Sex Offender Registration for Certain Crimes
AB-971, Human Trafficking of Adults at Risk for the Purpose of Commercial Sex Acts
AB-972, Solicitation for Prostitution and Providing a Penalty
AB-973, Mandatory Training Regarding Human Trafficking
AB-974, Civil Cause of Action for Human Trafficking and Trafficking a Child
AB-976, Testimony of a Child in a Criminal Proceeding for a Human Trafficking Crime
AB-978, Creation of a Human Trafficking Council
AB-979, Human Trafficking Victim Services Grant Program
AB-980, Displaying a Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline Poster
AB-981, Instruction on Human Trafficking in Certain Specialty Schools (Barbering)

Human trafficking constitutes one of the gravest offenses against basic human rights and dignity. It preys upon the most vulnerable men, women, and children, who are frequently coerced into performing the most degrading forms of human labor. It denies everything that a civilized society stands for and that Catholic social teaching espouses: the protection of human dignity and human rights; the preferential option for the poor; the call to family and community; the rights of workers; and solidarity.

As of 2022, it is estimated that over 27 million people are victims of human trafficking.¹ This can take the form of sexual exploitation, forced marriage, coerced and forced labor, child soldiers, and more. That number includes more than 3.3 million children. In

¹ International Labour Organization, *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery*, (September 2022)
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_854733.pdf



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

Wisconsin specifically, the National Human Trafficking Hotline reports nearly 800 cases involving over 1,600 victims with the vast majority suffering from sex trafficking.²

The Catholic Church, along with other religious and secular institutions, is involved in combating human trafficking both nationally and internationally. In the U.S., the Catholic Coalition Against Human Trafficking, which consists of about twenty Catholic organizations, was one of the groups that helped draft the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and its subsequent reauthorizations.³ Catholic women religious have been at the forefront of anti-trafficking work.⁴ They and countless other lay Catholics reach out directly to persons who are being trafficked to help with housing, transportation, childcare, employment, etc. In Milwaukee, the newly established St. Bakhita House, in partnership with Franciscan Peacemakers Clare Community, provides supportive community housing for women who are seeking to escape sex trafficking. Across Wisconsin, among people of every faith, awareness is growing that sex trafficking is destroying lives and wreaking havoc on families and communities.

The WCC, therefore, applauds the Speaker and those involved with the bipartisan task force for bringing forward these bills. These bills strive to give victims of human trafficking some hope that they will be delivered from their bondage and help prevent others from being ensnared in this violent and degrading world. We strongly urge the Legislature to pass these bills.

² Spectrum News 1, *How big of a problem is sex trafficking in Wisconsin?* (April 24, 2023) <https://spectrumnews1.com/wi/milwaukee/news/2023/04/19/part-1--how-big-of-a-problem-is-sex-trafficking-in-wisconsin->

³ The Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking (CCOAH) <https://www.usccb.org/offices/anti-trafficking-program/coalition-catholic-organizations-against-human-trafficking>

⁴ U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking: <https://sistersagainstrafficking.org>