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FIELD HEARING ON EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN WASHINGTON STATE

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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FIELD HEARING ON EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN WASHINGTON STATE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2014

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9:00 a.m., in Council Chambers of the Auburn City Hall, 25 West Main Street, Auburn, Washington, the Honorable Dave Reichert [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

[The advisory of the hearing follows:]

HEARING ADVISORY

Chairman Reichert Announces Field Hearing on Efforts to Prevent and Address Child Sex Trafficking in Washington State

Council Chambers of the Auburn City Hall at 25 West Main Street in Auburn, Washington
Washington, Feb 19, 2014

Congressman Dave Reichert (R–WA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means, today announced that the Subcommittee will hold a hearing on Washington State's efforts to prevent child sex trafficking and protect youth in foster care from becoming victims of this crime. **The hearing will take place at 9:00 a.m. Pacific Standard Time on Wednesday, February 19, 2014, in the Council Chambers of the Auburn City Hall at 25 West Main Street in Auburn, Washington.**

In view of the limited time available to hear from witnesses, oral testimony at this hearing will be from invited witnesses only. Witnesses will include a law enforcement official, as well as representatives of organizations working to prevent child sex trafficking by reducing the vulnerability of youth in foster care. However, any individual or organization not scheduled for an oral appearance may submit a written statement for consideration by the Committee and for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing.

In announcing the hearing, Chairman Reichert stated, **"This hearing will provide Congress with direct input from people on the front lines, such as law enforcement, local nonprofits, former foster youth, and survivors themselves, who are working to protect youth in foster care from sex traffickers. Their perspectives are critical and will inform our efforts to pass national legislation to do just that, ensuring more young people can grow up to lead healthy, successful lives."**

BACKGROUND:

Recognized as one of the first states to pass laws criminalizing human trafficking, Washington has been a leader in preventing and addressing child sex trafficking. For example, Shared Hope International, a group focused on preventing sex trafficking around the world, recently recognized the work of Washington in both prosecuting those who traffic children for sex and in protecting victims of this crime, giving the State an "A" grade for its work. In addition, a variety of State and local stakeholders have worked together to develop a statewide Model Protocol for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children. This protocol will help law enforcement, the courts, victim advocacy organizations, youth service agencies, and other first responders in better identifying child sex trafficking as well as the risks that make children vulnerable to this crime.

Reports suggest that children in the child welfare system are at heightened risk for being victims of sex trafficking. In 2010, officials in Los Angeles, California reported that 59 percent of juveniles arrested for prostitution were in the foster care system. Of children reported missing to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, who are also likely child sex trafficking victims, 60 percent were in foster care or group homes when they ran away. Research shows the majority of sex trafficked youth experienced sexual abuse growing up, and that victims of sexual abuse are 28 times more likely to be involved in prostitution than children who have not suffered such abuse. As improvements in the child welfare system aimed at preventing childhood sexual abuse are considered, it is critical that child welfare agencies be equipped to do more to prevent and address the consequences of this crime, especially when youth in foster care are involved.

FOCUS OF THE HEARING:

This hearing will highlight efforts by groups in the State of Washington to end child sex trafficking, prevent youth in foster care from becoming victims of this crime, and empower youth in foster care so they can achieve success.

DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS:

Please Note: Any person(s) and/or organization(s) wishing to submit for the hearing record must follow the appropriate link on the hearing page of the Committee website and complete the informational forms. From the Committee homepage, *http://waysandmeans.house.gov*, select "Hearings." Select the hearing for which you would like to submit, and click on the link entitled, "Please click here to submit a statement or letter for the record." Once you have followed the online instructions, submit all requested information. Attach your submission as a Word document, in compliance with the formatting requirements listed below, by **March 5, 2014.** Finally, please note that due to the change in House mail policy, the U.S. Capitol Police will refuse sealed-package deliveries to all House Office Buildings. For questions, or if you encounter technical problems, please call (202) 225–1721 or (202) 225–3625.

FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:

The Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record. As always, submissions will be included in the record according to the discretion of the Committee. The Committee will not alter the content of your submission, but we reserve the right to format it according to our guidelines. Any submission provided to the Committee by a witness, any supplementary materials submitted for the printed record, and any written comments in response to a request for written comments must conform to the guidelines listed below. Any submission or supplementary item not in compliance with these guidelines will not be printed, but will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

1. All submissions and supplementary materials must be provided in Word format and MUST NOT exceed a total of 10 pages, including attachments. Witnesses and submitters are advised that the Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record.

2. Copies of whole documents submitted as exhibit material will not be accepted for printing. Instead, exhibit material should be referenced and quoted or paraphrased. All exhibit material not meeting these specifications will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

3. All submissions must include a list of all clients, persons, and/or organizations on whose behalf the witness appears. A supplemental sheet must accompany each submission listing the name, company, address, telephone, and fax numbers of each witness.

The Committee seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202–225–1721 or 202–226–3411 TTD/TTY in advance of the event (four business days notice is requested). Questions with regard to special accommodation needs in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats) may be directed to the Committee as noted above.

Note: All Committee advisories and news releases are available online at *http://www.waysandmeans.house.gov/*.

Chairman REICHERT. I appreciate everybody being here today. This is such an important topic, and I think one that, of course, everyone in this room clearly understands. As I went around and met each of you before the hearing, discovering what your roles are in helping to eliminate human trafficking, I know Jim and I both appreciate all the hard work that you do. It is not an easy task.

We are also going to hear from some folks this morning, not only those who are working in the world of trying to prevent human trafficking, but we will also hear from folks who have nearly become involved in, or have been involved in, and are survivors. And I think it is important for us to hear from those folks as well.

I will read part of a prepared statement. Today, we are doing what Congress, in my opinion, should do more of, and that is get out of Washington, D.C., and listen to real people who deal with critical issues like we are dealing with today. We are grateful for all of our witnesses, and thank you all for joining us today, and we look forward to your testimony.

Your testimony will be made available on the Ways and Means Committee Web site for anyone around the country to read and, hopefully, use as communities work together to prevent sex trafficking.

And I am pleased to be joined by my longtime colleague on the Ways and Means Committee, Jim McDermott. We are pleased to have Jim with us here today. He is the past chairman of the Human Resources Subcommittee and has a wealth of knowledge, as you might guess, about these issues from his days in the Washington State Legislature as well.

I would also like to acknowledge Mayor Nancy Backus, Councilman Bill Peloza, and their staffs, and thank them all for their work in helping make this possible today.

Before being elected to Congress, I was the sheriff of King County, as most of you know. And I spent nearly 33 years in the Sheriff's Office right here in King County. And I know that you also know I saw firsthand in my work, not only in the Green River case, but on patrol when I first started in the early '70s, the tragedy that occurs when young boys and young girls run away from home, leave their dysfunctional homes and end up on the street.

And a lot of time, they end up in the arms of people who are there to do them harm, and they figure that out way too late. And in some cases, they lose their lives, and families are ripped and torn apart. In some cases, they survive, but they are scarred for life, living in that community, in that underworld.

And it is so critical for us to take action to work together to end and eliminate human trafficking. These are children that we are talking about.

Back in the Green River days, I can remember meeting young girls and young boys on the street who were 11 years old, 12 years old. And I know that some of you today are still dealing with young children on the streets of our cities right here in our own communities.

Back in August 1982, I was called to investigate with Kent Police Department the body of a young woman who was found in the Green River in Kent, only a few miles from where we are sitting right now. Three days later, I received a call about two more bodies, both young women. And then I found a third body at that same location.

Little did I know on that day, but finding these victims began a 2-decade hunt for a man who became known as the Green River killer. Once caught, he confessed to killing between 60 and 70 young women who had been involved in the sex trade.

The first known victim of the Green River killer was Wendy Coffield. She was only 16 years old when she was killed. Wendy was living in a foster home when she ran away. But because she had run away before, no one was looking for her. We need to do more to protect kids like Wendy Coffield, and that is why we are all here today.

To better understand this issue, we have already had several hearings in Washington, D.C. Our own Justice Bobbe Bridge joined us for one of those hearings when she summarized what has been happening here in Washington, and also provided us with recommendations for national reforms.

Based on her recommendations and those of other experts, this last week, I introduced legislation to help every State better protect youth in foster care from being victims of sex trafficking. And I was pleased to be joined in introducing that bill by my colleague Lloyd Doggett of Texas, who currently serves as the lead Democrat on the subcommittee, as well as Mr. McDermott, who also serves on the Ways and Means Committee. Other Congressional committees have also been working on strengthening penalties on traffickers and johns, as well as preventing international trafficking.

Later this year, I expect the House will act on all of those bills, and I am confident we will be able to get our legislation to the President's desk. The reason I am confident is because the approach we are taking is practical, based on State experience, and it is bipartisan.

As Jim can tell you, when we get the lead Republican and the lead Democrat on a subcommittee to agree on a bill, that is usually a formula for success.

Our bill will not increase our debt, but we will ensure that all States take real steps to better understand the problem and keep kids safe while they are in foster care. That is a beginning and not an end.

Ultimately, making this work will require having discussions like this one in communities all across the country. This community is uniquely suited to lead that conversation and show the way.

Again, many thanks to all of you who are here today, playing a part in doing just that.

I now recognize Mr. McDermott for his opening statement.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Thank you very much, Dave.

You are witnessing a rare occurrence, I think, in the modern-day Congress, a Democrat and a Republican working together on something. This subcommittee has had a long history of being very nonpartisan, because the issue that we are dealing with here is not Democrat, is not Republican. It is kids that are ground up in the system.

And the bills that I put through when I was the chairman, the Foster Connections and some of the other acts, related to foster kids and the things that Dave is putting through, and people before me, are always bipartisan. In fact, my bills went through the House, both with me as chairman and with a Republican as chairman, with no votes against it, because we worked together on this issue.

And I think that Dave is to be commended for having this hearing.

The issue, it seems to me, of trafficking is sometimes—I want to make sure people understand we are talking not only about girls, but also about boys, because that is a real part of this problem. And the tie to foster care is a very tight one in many, many, many instances because youngsters get into a foster situation and decide, for whatever reason, they can't stand it. And they leave when they are under 18, or they come to the age of 18 and they age out of foster care and have no other resources.

So they go out in the streets, and drugs and prostitution are right there. And it is a way to live, a terrible kind of life, but it is a way to do it.

And the efforts to interrupt that, I think, are what we are really here to talk about today. And I would rather listen to the witnesses than talk.

I am a child psychiatrist, and I have been doing it since 1970. I started out at Cascadia and a lot of other places where youngsters who are in these situations wind up, and I have seen it all.

But we have had our problems in finding the resources to actually help these kids on a widespread basis. And I would like to hear what is going on today.

So thanks, Dave. And thanks for all of you for coming in to testify.

Chairman REICHERT. Great, Jim. Thank you so much.

And without objection, each member will have the opportunity to submit a written statement and have it included in the record at this point.

Chairman REICHERT. I want to remind our witnesses to please limit their oral statements to 5 minutes. However, without objection, all the written testimony will be made a part of the permanent record.

So if panelists would please take your seats at this time, we will introduce you and we will begin our testimony.

Thank you.

So on our panel this morning, we will be hearing from Jeanne Kohl-Welles, a senator of the 36th Legislative District of Washington. Thank you for being here, Senator.

John Urquhart, the sheriff of King County. John, thanks for being here.

Reagan Dunn, councilman, King County. Reagan, thank you for being here.

Noel Gomez, cofounder and director of Survivor Services, Seattle Organization for Prostitution Survivors. Noel, thank you for being here today.

Mandy Urwiler, senior network representative, The Mockingbird Society. Mandy, good to see you again. Thank you for being here this morning.

Dawn Rains, chief operating officer of Treehouse. Dawn, thanks for being here this morning.

Senator, you are recognized for your statement this morning. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF JEANNE KOHL-WELLES, SENATOR, 36TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

Ms. KOHL-WELLES Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning on this important issue.

As you noted in your advisory, Washington State has been a leader in the Nation on antisex trafficking legislation since former State Representative Velma Veloria began championing this effort in the Legislature in 2002.

Washington was the first State to outlaw human trafficking. And between 2002 and 2013, the Legislature passed 33 bills, all with bipartisan leadership and supporters.

But sex trafficking, as well as all forms of human trafficking, is a pervasive and ever-changing social problem. It occurs in many forms, from mail-order bride trafficking, including two murders in our State, to false advertisements for au pairs, and to the coercion of minors and children being trafficked via the Internet.

Unfortunately, though, 33 antitrafficking bills over 11 years only begins to address this horrifying commodification of human beings. Domestic sex trafficking of minors came to light in the mid-2000s as a recognizable term, with considerable awareness brought by former U.S. Congresswoman Linda Smith and Shared Hope International, API Chaya, the Committee for Children, Seattle Against Slavery, and YouthCare, among others.

We have made a great deal of progress in passing legislation and, I believe, also in raising awareness among the public.

We began our work, mainly, on sex trafficking of minors with Senate Bill 5718, passed in 2007. It created a new crime of commercial sexual abuse of a minor, which replaced the crime of patronizing a juvenile prostitute. Follow-up legislation in 2009 and 2010 strengthened penalties and allowed for diversion of cases for those minors who agreed to participate in wraparound services.

We also, in 2010, with the efforts of Seattle Against Slavery and with the State Attorney General Rob McKenna, permitted placement of informational posters in rest stops along I–5 and other State highways in conjunction with the winter Olympics taking place in British Columbia, which seemed to be placing more youth at risk.

Treating victims of trafficking, especially children and minors, as victims rather than criminals has been an important component of the laws we have enacted.

Children are not prostitutes. They are victims. They are coerced or forced into this practice by perpetrators and need to be protected and assisted, not jailed.

Another important component to the way sex trafficking of minors is being addressed in Washington is by meeting head on the challenges that technology and the Internet pose when addressing this problem. Twelve bills became law in 2012—we have a handout for you—including a bill that was the first of its kind in the country relating to the online advertiser Backpage.com.

Senate Bill 6251 created a new crime of publishing adult escort ads involving minors while providing an affirmative defense for advertising businesses that verify the age of the individuals depicted in the ads, which Backpage does not do. It was passed unanimously by the Legislature. And, unfortunately, when it came into effect,

Backpage.com sued the State in Federal court charging the new law violated the First Amendment and the 1996 Federal Communications Decency Act.

After the case was settled, Senate Bill 5488, passed in 2013, repealed the law and imposed an additional fine of $5,000 for using online ads to facilitate the commercial sexual abuse of a minor.

I am running out of my time, so you will have to read my written testimony, but I am pleased that we did pass just yesterday before our 5 p.m. cutoff to get bills out of their house of origin, Senate Bill 6017, which allows local law enforcement to seize materials and properties used in connection with child pornography and commercial sexual abuse of a minor, and to keep more of the assets in order to defray the costs of investigations and reapply the funds to future investigations in this bill.

Thank you very much for inviting me.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kohl-Welles follows:]

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Testimony to Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means – 2/19/2014

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning on this important issue.

As you noted in your advisory, Washington State has been a leader in this nation on anti-sex and human trafficking legislation since former state Rep. Velma Veloria began championing this effort in the Legislature in 2002. Washington was the first state to outlaw human trafficking and, between 2002 and 2013, the Legislature passed 33 anti-trafficking bills.

But sex trafficking, as well as all forms of human trafficking, is a pervasive and ever-changing social problem. It occurs in a wide variety of forms, from mail-order bride trafficking, including two murders, to false advertisements for au pairs, and to the coercion of minors and children being trafficked via the internet. Unfortunately, though, thirty-three anti-trafficking bills over eleven years only begin to address this horrifying commodification of human beings.

Domestic sex trafficking of minors came to light in the mid-2000s, with considerable awareness brought by former U.S. Congresswoman and Washington State Senator Linda Smith and Shared Hope International, API Chaya, the Committee for Children, Seattle Against Slavery, and YouthCare among others. Progress has certainly been made. Major legislation, Senate Bill 5718, passed in 2007, creating a new crime of commercial sexual abuse of a minor, replacing the crime of patronizing a juvenile prostitute. Follow-up legislation passed in 2009 permitted prosecutors to divert cases in which minors agreed to participate in wraparound services such as counseling (HB 1505), and, in 2010, SB 6476 strengthened penalties for those who engage in commercial sexual abuse of a minor. Also in 2010, SB 6330 permitted placement of informational posters on sex and labor trafficking in highway rest stops to coincide with increased risk during the Winter Olympics held in British Columbia. And in 2011, HB 1874 authorized law enforcement officers to conduct surveillance operations on suspected sex trafficking with the victim's consent.

Treating victims of trafficking, especially children and minors, as victims rather than criminals has been an important component of the laws we've enacted. Children are not prostitutes, they are victims. They are coerced or forced into this practice by criminals and need to be protected and assisted, not jailed.

Another important component to the way sex trafficking of minors is being addressed in Washington is by meeting head on the challenges that technology and the internet pose when addressing this problem. Twelve bills became law in 2012 (see handout), including a bill that was the first of its kind in this country, relating to the online advertiser *backpage.com*. SB 6251 created a new crime of publishing adult escort ads involving minors, while providing an affirmative defense for advertising businesses that verify the age of the individual depicted in the ads.

It was passed unanimously by the Legislature as well as garnered the support of the state Attorney General. Unfortunately, *backpage.com* sued the state in federal court charging the new law violated the First Amendment and the 1996 Federal Communications Decency Act. After the case was settled, SB 5488 passed in 2013 which repealed the law and imposed an additional fine of $5,000 for using online ads to facilitate the commercial sexual abuse of a minor.

Some of the other crucial legislation that came out of the 2012 session were the criminalization of compelling a person with a disability into the act of prostitution (SB 6254), increasing fees for those who patronize a prostitute and redirecting those fees to increase enforcement prevention of prostitution (HB 1893, HB 2692), and criminalizing the ordering, luring, or attempting to lure a minor or a person with a cognitive disability into any motor vehicle (SB 6258).

Four other laws enacted last year created a new Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Statewide Coordinating Committee (SB 5308) and a new Statewide Coordinating Committee on Sex Crimes (HB 1291), required training on recognition and prevention of sex trafficking and commercial sexual abuse and exploitation of minors to be completed by new teachers (SB 5563), and allowed a victim up to 14 years of age to testify outside the presence of his/her abuser and that victim consent cannot be used as a defense (SB 5669). The technologies and internet components of trafficking will continue to be a challenge, particularly for our younger generations, as the internet permeates most aspects of their lives.

The internet also makes apprehending the real perpetrators of these crimes – the pimps and 'johns' who pay for sex or sexual exploitation of minors – a significant challenge. When one ad is taken down, another pops up in its place. And in many ways, the streets have been replaced with social media -- which have also proven to be an effective tool of information gathering, coercion and the preying upon vulnerable individuals, especially minors.

But in our ongoing efforts in Washington to support victims of trafficking rather than prosecute them, we have begun to take steps to allow our law enforcement to go after these perpetrators more vigorously. Several bills are making their way through the Legislature this year, including SB 6017 which allows law enforcement to seize materials used in connection with child pornography and commercial sexual abuse of a minor, and to keep more of the assets in order to defray the cost of investigations and reapply the funds to future investigations in this area.

Another bill, SB 6434, provides additional significant forfeiture authority when dealing directly with those who pay for sex or sexual exploitation of minors, or those patronizing a prostitute. And SB 6435 would hold those who sexually exploit a minor financially responsible for restitution to the victim, in the form of attorney fees, medical bills, lost income, etc. Another is HB 1292 that would vacate conviction records of minors for prostitution

offenses. I am also pleased that Senate Joint Memorial 8003 has passed the Senate this year. It requests that Congress amend the Federal Communications Decency Act of 1996 to reflect the current scope of the internet and take into account the role IPOs play in the advertising and profiting from sexual exploitation of minors.

As Washington shares an ocean border with Asia and Russia and a land border with Canada, we unfortunately have long been a gateway for trafficking victims coming into the U.S. But the internet has opened all borders, resulting in an almost irrelevance of having to leave a town or a residence for arranging for sex trafficking to occur—among those brought into our country as well as our own citizens. We must address these 21st century challenges which can and do have devastating effects on young lives. I appreciate your holding this hearing today and, as such, am optimistic that the federal and state governments working together and with our local and national NGOs and other organizations, we will continue making progress.

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Landmark Washington State Accomplishments to Prevent and Respond to Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Minors

TASK FORCES

- **HB 2381 (2002)** created the **Task Force against Trafficking of Persons**—the first of its kind in the nation—directed to measure and evaluate the state's progress in trafficking prevention activities, identify available programs providing services to victims of trafficking, and recommend methods to provide a coordinated system of support and assistance to victims of trafficking (Veloria). *Task Force Reports issued in 2002, 2004, 2005 (see below).*
    - http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Documents/OCVA-HT-2002-HT-Report.pdf
    - http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Documents/OCVA-HT-2004-Task-Force-Report.pdf
    - http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Documents/OCVA-HT-2005-Task-Force-Report.pdf
    - (2006) Task Force funding was renewed and the task force was directed to create a Comprehensive Response to Human Trafficking—a coordinated system containing seven components, including prevention, victim identification and victim services.
- **SB 5308 (2013)** created the **Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Statewide Coordinating Committee** to examine laws and practices of local and regional entities to address issues relating to commercially and sexually exploited children and make recommendations for statewide protocols, laws and practices (Kohl-Welles). *RCW 7.68.*
- **HB 1291 (2013)** created the **Statewide Coordinating Committee on Sex Crimes** to oversee the distribution of funds collected from trafficking crimes to services for victims of sex trade, including revenue collected from impounding vehicles when the driver is involved in exploiting a sex trafficking victim. Fifty percent of revenue from fees and fines for sex crimes must be spent on preventative and rehabilitative services for victims of sex trafficking (Orwall). *RCW 43.63A.740, 9.68A.105, 9A.88.120, 9A.88.140, 43.280.*

PREVENTION EFFORTS

- **SB 6412 (2002)** the International Matchmaking Organization Act—also the first of its kind in the nation—established protections for prospective foreign spouses of Washington residents who go through online international marriage brokers by requiring the brokers to notify recruits in their native languge that background check and marital history information is available for prospective spouses who are Washington residents (Kohl-Welles). *RCW 19.220.010.*
- **HB 1826 (2003)** increased protections for prospective foreign spouses by also making personal history information available to them, including spousal abuse and founded child abuse (Veloria). *RCW 19.220.010.*
- The Federal International Marriage Brokers Regulations Act **(2006)** was signed into law as part of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005. *Pub. L. No. 109-162, 119 Stat. 2960 (2006).*
- **SB 5850 (2009)**—the first legislation of its kind in the nation—required international labor recruiters and domestic employers of foreign workers to disclose federal and state labor laws to employees and required health care professionals be provided with information to help identify human trafficking victims (Kohl-Welles). *RCW 19.320.020.*
- **SB 6332 (2010)** built on SB 5850 enacted in 2009, added nonimmigrant workers to the list of employees who must be provided with federal and state labor laws, and established civil penalties for labor recruiters and employers who fail to do so (Kohl-Welles). *RCW 19.320.010.*
- **SB 6330 (2010)** allowed informational posters on domestic trafficking, including trafficking of minors and a "1-800" number, to be placed at rest stops throughout the state which could be very helpful for individuals being taken to international events, such as the Winter Olympics which were held in British Columbia (Kohl-Welles). *RCW 47.38.080.*
- **HB 1874 (2011)** authorized law enforcement officers to conduct surveillance operations on suspected human-trafficking and commercial sexual abuse activities with the consent of the victim. It also authorized prosecutors to request assistance from minors in the undercover surveillance of telephone communications in trafficking investigations without putting youth in danger (Dickerson). *RCW 9.73.210 and .230.*
- **SSB 5563 (2013)** requires training on recognition and prevention of commercial sexual abuse and exploitation of minors to be completed by new teachers, and of all school employees in their orientation and every three years thereafter. The Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, in consultation with other organizations, must update existing educational materials informing parents and other interested community members about how to prevent children from being recruited into sex trafficking, among other issues (Kohl-Welles). *RCW 28A.410.035, 28A.300.145, 28A.400.317.*

SURVIVOR SERVICES

- **SB 5127 (2005)** created requirements for state agencies to develop written protocols for the delivery of services to victims of human trafficking (Kohl-Welles). *RCW 7.68.360*
- (2005) State funding was provided for legal aid to undocumented immigrants who are victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, or human trafficking.

- **SB 6339 (2007)** added victims of human trafficking to the list of persons eligible for the state's address confidentiality program (Kohl-Welles). *RCW 40.24.010.*
- **HB 1505 (2009)** allowed prosecutors to divert cases in which a minor is alleged to have committed the offense of prostitution, if the juvenile agrees to participate in a program that provides wraparound services, including mental health counseling (Dickerson). *RCW 13.40.213.*
- **SB 5482 (2011)** authorized local governments to use affordable housing funds to provide housing assistance to victims of human trafficking and their families (Kohl-Welles). *RCW 36.22.178, .179, and .1791.*
- **SB 6255 (2012)** allowed minors who were convicted of prostitution resulting from being trafficked by force, fraud, or coercion to request the court to vacate the conviction (Fraser). *RCW 9.96.060 and Chapter 9A.88 RCW.*
- **SB 5669 (2013)** allows for a victim up to 14 years of age to testify outside the presence of her or his abuser. This bill also tightens current laws addressing trafficking, clarifies that victim consent cannot be used as a defense in the prosecution of a trafficking crime, including when an abuser utilizes an online platform to recruit or sell the victim for sex (Padden). *RCW 9.68A.090, 9.68A.100, 9.68A.101, 9.68A.102, 9.68A.103, 9A.44.020, 9A.44.128, 9A.44.150, 9A.82.010, 13.34.132, 9A.40.100.*

PENALITIES

- **HB 1175 (2003)** created two human trafficking crimes, both class A felonies, and expanded the definition of criminal profiteering to include the crime of trafficking—making Washington the first state in the nation to criminalize trafficking and specify criminal and civil penalties (Veloria). *RCW 9A.40.100.*
- **SB 6731 (2005)** prohibited sex tourism—making WA the second state in the nation to do so (Fraser). *RCW 9A.88.085.*
- **SB 5718 (2007)** created four new crimes relating to child sexual exploitation: commercial sexual abuse of a minor (CSAM) that replaced the crime of patronizing a juvenile prostitute, promoting CSAM, promoting travel for CSAM, and permitting CSAM. It also added an additional one-year penalty to the sentence for a conviction of the most serious crimes of child sex abuse if the offender paid to engage in the abuse (Kohl-Welles). *RCW 9.68A.100 through .103.*
- **SB 6476 (2010)** strengthened penalties for the crime of commercial sexual abuse of a minor and required development of training for law enforcement officers (Stevens). *RCW 9.68A.100, .101, and .105, and 9A.88.140.*
- **SB 5546 (2011)** amended the crime of human trafficking to include the illegal harvesting or sale of human organs and broadened the scope of the crimes to hold criminals accountable when caught transporting a person despite not knowing whether the person would eventually be forced into prostitution or manual labor (Kohl-Welles). *RCW 9A.40.100 and .010, 9.95.062, and 10.64.025.*
- **SB 6251 (2012)** created a new crime, making it illegal to knowingly publish an escort ad on-line or in print that involves a minor (Kohl-Welles). *Chapter 9.68A RCW.* (Was repealed following federal court injunction based on a finding that law violated the federal Communications Decency Act and the First Amendment.)

- **SB 6252 (2012)** added the crimes of commercial sexual abuse of a minor and promoting commercial sexual abuse of a minor to the list of offenses that may constitute a pattern of criminal profiteering activity (Kline). *RCW 9A.82.010 and .100.*
- **SB 6253 (2012)** authorized law enforcement agencies to seize any proceeds or property that facilitate the crimes of commercial sexual abuse of a minor (Eide). *Chapter 9A.88 RCW.*
- **SB 6254 (2012)** criminalized the act of compelling a person with a disability that renders the person incapable of consent to engage in an act of prostitution (Delvin). *RCW 9A.88.070.*
- **SB 6256 (2012)** added to the list of gang-related crimes the promotion of sexual abuse of a minor that provides the gang with an advantage, control, or dominance over a market sector (Conway). *RCW 9.94A.030.*
- **SB 6257 (2012)** defined sexually explicit acts with regard to sex trafficking and promoting the sexual abuse of a minor (Roach). *RCW 9.68A.101 and 9A.40.100.*
- **SB 6258 (2012)** criminalized ordering, luring, or attempting to lure a minor or a person with a cognitive disability into any transportation terminal or into a motor vehicle (Stevens). *RCW 9A.40.090.*
- **SB 6103 (2012)** prohibited anyone from practicing reflexology or representing himself or herself as a reflexologist unless certified as a reflexologist or licensed by the health department as a massage practitioner (Keiser). *Chapter 18.108 RCW.*
- **HB 1983 (2012)** increased the fees imposed against individuals convicted of promoting or patronizing prostitution (Parker). *RCW 9A.40.100, 9A.44.128, 9A.88.120, 9.68A.105, 3.50.100, 3.62.020, 3.62.040, 10.82.070, and 35.20.220.*
- **HB 2692 (2012)** increased the additional fine a person must pay when convicted of patronizing a prostitute and requires those fees be used to pay for increased enforcement and prevention programs (Orwall). *RCW 9A.88.130, 3.50.100, 3.62.020, 3.62.040, 10.82.070, and 35.20.220.*
- **HB 2177 (2012)** prohibited the duplication or distribution of child pornography as part of the discovery process in a criminal prosecution, and instead required the material to be made reasonably available to the prosecutor, defense attorney, and expert witnesses who may testify at trial (Ladenburg). *Chapter 9.68A RCW.*
- **SB 5488 (2013)** imposes a $5,000 fine on top of existing penalties for using online ads to facilitate the commercial sexual abuse of a minor. The bill defines an internet advertisement as a statement in electronic media that would be understood by a reasonable person to be an implicit offer for sexual contact or sexual intercourse in exchange for something of value (Kohl-Welles). *RCW 9.68, 9.68A.*

2014 PENDING LEGISLATION

- **HB 1292** Prostitution Convictions: Allows a victim of Trafficking, Promoting Prostitution in the first degree, or Commercial Sex Abuse of a Minor to vacate the record of a related prostitution conviction regardless of whether he or she has pending criminal charges for prostitution; has a subsequent conviction for prostitution; or has had the record of another prostitution conviction vacated. (Orwall)

- **SB 6252** Felony Sex Offenders: Requires the Sex Offender Policy Review Board to review and make recommendations to the legislature regarding the process used by the Department of Corrections for identifying housing providers for the housing voucher program, residence restrictions for sex offenders based on crime of conviction and risk level, and the impact of city and county ordinances. (Dammeier)
- **SB 6434** Patronizing a Prostitute: Subject the following types of property to seizure and forfeiture:
    - all conveyances, including aircrafts, vehicles, or vessels used or intended to be used to facilitate the crime of patronizing a prostitute; and
    - all money, negotiable instruments, securities, or other tangible or intangible property of value that is furnished or intended to be furnished by a person in exchange for patronizing a prostitute. (O'Ban)
- **SB 6435** Sexual Exploitation of a Child: Requires a court, in addition to other civil or criminal penalties authorized by law, to order a person convicted of sexual exploitation of children to pay restitution to the victim for the full amount of the victim's losses. (O'Ban)
- **SJM 8003** Communications Decency Act: Requests Congress to amend the Communications Decency Act. (Kohl-Welles)
- **SB 6017** Sex Crimes/Seizures & Forfeiture: Revises the distribution proceeds from sex crime-related seizures to allow local law enforcement to recoup cost of forfeiture proceedings and requires balance of funds be applied to enforcing laws against prostitution and child sexual exploitation. (Kohl-Welles)
- **HB 1791** Trafficking: Expands the definition of "sex offense" to include Trafficking in the first degree when force, fraud, or coercion is used to cause the trafficked person to engage in a sexually explicit act or a commercial sex act or when a person under 18 years old is caused to engage in a sexually explicit act or a commercial sex act. (Parker)
- **HB 2644** (Ryu) and **SB 6339** (Fraser)Involuntary Servitude: Creates the offense of *Coercion of Involuntary Servitude,* defined as:
    - withholding or threatening to withhold or destroy documents relating to a person's immigration status; or
    - threatening to notify law enforcement officials that a person is present in the United States in violation of federal immigration laws.

For more information about Washington bills and laws, go to www.leg.wa.gov.

Guest: Treat sexually exploited children as victims, not prostitutes

Washington state must do more to ensure child victims of sex trafficking are in fact treated as victims of sexual exploitation, according to guest columnists Jeanne Kohl-Welles and Debra Boyer.

(Originally published in Seattle Times on Thursday, September 26, 2013)

By Jeanne Kohl-Welles and Debra Boyer

EVERY night in King County, 300 to 500 children are out on the streets, lured and forced into prostitution.

We must do more to ensure child victims of sex trafficking are in fact treated as victims of sexual exploitation and provided protection and services — a lifeline essential to helping them get off the streets.

Our state has taken major steps to combat human trafficking, but there is a major barrier to services for commercially sexually exploited children. Child victims of sex trafficking who have been forced into prostitution continue to be treated as offenders and placed in the juvenile-justice system rather than provided services afforded other victims of child sexual abuse and sexual assault.

While we still need better data-collection methods, we know that since 2008, 210 children have been arrested as prostitutes in Washington.

While we've made policy changes to better support these victims, their legal status remains unclear. As they go through the justice system, they yo-yo back and forth between being treated as victims and as criminal offenders.

Offender-focused treatment for these sexually exploited children results in mistrust of those responsible for their well-being and safety. That mistrust drives them back to pimps and traffickers.

The juvenile-justice system has never been completely successful in addressing this problem. It still falls short of offering the noncriminal response needed by traumatized and exploited children.

We need to move children who are exploited sexually and commercially out of the juvenile-justice system, which is designed to work with criminals.

We need to formally and legally redefine them. They are not offenders, they are victims — a status already established under federal law. They would still be arrested and charged if they committed another crime — stealing a car, or selling drugs, for instance.

But children are not prostitutes. They are prostituted through coercion, not choice, and the law should reflect that. If we take this step, both symbolically and legally, we can reduce mistrust of service providers and reduce the chances of child victims returning to the streets and pimps.

We should legally define this type of sexual exploitation as what it is, child abuse, and place it under the purview of Child Protective Services. That agency, along with Adolescent Services provided through the state Department of Social and Human Services and community-based services, could provide housing and treatment for child victims as they come off the streets.

Next legislative session, we expect legislation will be introduced to redefine victims and provide additional support for them. We're going to work with advocates, prosecutors, agencies and the victims themselves to find exactly what solutions will work best. This is the next step in protecting trafficked children and reducing the sexual exploitation of children.

Judge our society by how we take care of our most vulnerable. Few are more vulnerable than sexually exploited children.

State Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, D-Seattle, left, has sponsored legislation combating human trafficking and child exploitation. Debra Boyer is the author of the study "Who Pays The Price?" on child-sexual exploitation in Washington.

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Chairman REICHERT. Thank you, Senator.

We have an emergency over to my right.

[Laughter.]

Chairman REICHERT. Sheriff, you are recognized for 5 minutes for your testimony.

STATEMENT OF JOHN URQUHART, SHERIFF, KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Sheriff URQUHART. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am very honored to appear today before this committee.

The trafficking of our youth is an abhorrent practice, and the issue is long overdue for the type of publicity and exposure it seems to be finally receiving.

While any one of any age can be trafficked, the legislation we are here to discuss today focuses on a subset of girls and boys who are especially vulnerable to becoming victims of this form of modern-day slavery.

Mr. Chair, I have been a police officer for 38 years. You were my sergeant back in the day, and as we both know, society did not always view those trapped in the sex trade as victims. We had other words for them: hooker, prostitute, and streetwalker, to name a few. "Victim" was never one of those words.

Sure, we occasionally arrested the johns who were out there soliciting, but you and I both know it was much easier to make a case against the woman working the street than her customer.

I spent a lot of time on patrol and then as a vice detective on Pacific Highway South, which eventually became the City of SeaTac.

I investigated and arrested people for prostitution. Those were my marching orders. And I arrested a lot of women, and occasionally girls, who were selling their bodies. And virtually all of them went to jail or the youth center.

Mr. Chair, those days do not stir up feelings of nostalgia for me. But as society evolves, as people evolve, so must law enforcement evolve.

Thankfully, this groundswell of evolution has occurred in Washington State at all levels of government. For years, the Office of Attorney General, through two administrations, has made fighting human trafficking one of its top priorities. Locally, the King County Council, with the leadership of Councilmember Dunn, has allocated specific funding for public health and to the Sheriff's Office to raise awareness and to understand the problem of human trafficking better.

King County Superior Court Judge Barbara Mack is chairing the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Task Force to develop and implement a coordinated, countywide response to childhood prostitution. The King County prosecutor, Dan Satterberg, takes cases of human trafficking very seriously and even obtained Washington State's first conviction under our human trafficking statute.

And my patrol deputies and detectives in the Sheriff's Office place a high priority on locating and rescuing those who have been coerced, beaten, or otherwise trafficked against their will.

Last year, we implemented mandatory training for all commissioned personnel to recognize the signs of human trafficking. My deputies now have a broader base of resources for which to refer victims.

And every day we partner with the Federal Government on a joint task force to fight human trafficking. We constantly share information and resources with the U.S. Attorneys' Office locally, because oftentimes investigating the perpetrators of this crime takes us across jurisdictional boundaries.

Mr. Chair, the legislation discussed today addresses a systemic failure for our children who have no choice but to depend on the State for their welfare. As you, yourself, have quoted, 59 percent

of juveniles arrested in Los Angeles for prostitution were in the foster care system. Sixty percent of child sex trafficking victims were in foster care or group homes before they ran away.

These statistics are simply astounding. They came as a surprise to me, but I am not so sure the numbers surprised everyone in this room. This room is filled with service providers who have spent years trying to convince the public that the vast majority of those involved in the sex trade have been victims of abuse in the past, making them that much more susceptible for continued abuse.

There is nothing voluntary about a child who has engaged in survival sex. There is nothing voluntary about a woman whose pimp coerces and pressures her into engaging in sex for money, just to have the pimp keep the proceeds. And there is absolutely nothing voluntary about any adult paying any child for sex.

I spoke earlier about a certain level of lack of sympathy law enforcement used to have for the victims caught up in the sex trade. Thankfully, Mr. Chair, I suspect you were ahead of the times in those days. One has to only know your personal history as a teenager, or have watched the level of compassion and determination for justice you showed for the victims of the Green River killer, to know that this issue has been and will always be near and dear to your heart.

No, I am not nostalgic for those days. But putting that different time into perspective shows how far we have come in recognizing and fighting human trafficking. Simply put, this legislation will save lives, and I thank you for taking up the cause.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Sheriff Urquhart follows:]

KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
516 Third Avenue, W-116
Seattle, WA 98104

John Urquhart
Sheriff

Testimony of Sheriff John Urquhart for the February, 19, 2014 hearing on Human Trafficking at the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee of Ways and Means

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am very honored to appear today before this committee. The trafficking of our youth is an abhorrent practice, and the issue is long overdue for the type of publicity and exposure it seems to finally be receiving.

While anyone of any age can be trafficked, the legislation we're here to discuss today focuses on a subset of youth, girls *and* boys, who are especially vulnerable to becoming victims of this form of modern-day slavery.

Mr. Chair, I have been a police officer for 38 years. You were my sergeant back when I first joined the Sheriff's Office as a full-time deputy, and as we both know, society did not always view those trapped in the sex trade as victims. We had other words for them: hooker, prostitute, and street walker to name a few. Sure, we arrested and investigated the johns who were out there soliciting, but you and I both know it was much easier to make a case against the women on the street.

I spent a lot of time on patrol and as a vice detective on the streets of what is now the City of SeaTac investigating and arresting people for prostitution. Those were my marching orders. In fact, one of the main arguments made for SeaTac's incorporation as a city at the time was to get a better handle on the quote, "problem", of prostitution. And it was simple, and it was the right thing to do, because they were breaking the law…right?

Mr. Chair, those days do not stir up feelings of nostalgia inside of me.

As society evolves, as the people evolve, so must law enforcement evolve. Thankfully this groundswell of evolution has occurred in Washington State at all levels of government.

For years the Office of the Attorney General, through two administrations, has made fighting human trafficking one of its top priorities. Locally, the King County Council has allocated specific funding to Public Health and to the Sheriff's Office to raise awareness about and to investigate human trafficking. King County Superior Court Judge Barbara Mack is chairing the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Task Force to develop and implement a coordinated, county wide response to childhood prostitution. The King County Prosecutor takes cases of human trafficking very seriously, and even obtained Washington State's first conviction under our Human Trafficking statute.

And my patrol deputies and detectives in the Sheriff's Office place a high priority on locating and rescuing those who have been coerced or otherwise trafficked against their will. Last year, we implemented mandatory training for all commissioned personnel to recognize the signs of human trafficking in those we come in contact with. My deputies now have a broader base of resources for which to refer victims of trafficking for better support. And every day we are partnering with the federal government on joint task forces to fight human trafficking. We constantly share information and resources with the U.S. Attorney's Office, because often times investigating the perpetrators of human trafficking takes us across jurisdictional boundaries.

Mr. Chair, the legislation discussed today addresses a systemic failure for our children who have no choice but to depend on the state for their welfare. As you, yourself, have quoted, 59 percent of juveniles arrested in Los Angeles for prostitution were in the foster care system. 60 percent of child sex trafficking victims were in foster care or group homes when they ran away. These statistics are simply astounding. They came as a surprise to me, but I'm not so sure the numbers surprised everyone in this room.

This room is filled with service providers who have spent years trying to convince the public that the vast majority of those involved in the sex trade have been victims of abuse in the past, making them that much more susceptible for continued abuse. There is nothing voluntary about a child who has engaged in survival sex. There is nothing voluntary about a woman whose pimp coerces and pressures her into engaging in sex for money, just to have that same pimp keep the proceeds. And there is absolutely nothing voluntary about <u>any</u> adult paying <u>any</u> child for sex.

I spoke earlier about a certain level of callousness law enforcement used to have for victims caught up in the sex trade. Thankfully, Mr. Chair, I suspect you were ahead of the times in those days. One has to only know your personal history as a runaway, or to have watched the level of compassion and determination for justice you showed for the victims of the Green River Killer to know that this issue has been and will always be near and dear to your heart.

No, I'm not nostalgic for those days. But putting them into perspective shows how far we have all come in recognizing and fighting human trafficking. Simply put, this legislation will save lives, and I thank you for taking up this cause.

Thank you.

Chairman REICHERT. Sheriff, thank you for your testimony. Councilman Dunn, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF REAGAN DUNN, COUNCILMAN, KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Mr. DUNN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. Congressman McDermott, as well. We are grateful for this. It is such an important issue. I wanted to highlight some of the work that King County has done to fight human trafficking.

It is estimated that, this year alone, between 300 and 500 young people—mostly women, but some boys and men—will be brought into the sex trade in King County alone, and that is a number we estimate occurs every year. That doesn't mean 300 to 500 incidents of actual sexual slavery but new people brought into the profession.

And so it is a serious issue, and children as young as 11 years old have been brought in and sexually exploited for commercial purposes in King County.

Through the hard work of many individuals in Olympia, such as Senator Kohl-Welles, who just testified, Washington State has been a national leader in legislation to fight human trafficking. And I wanted to take a moment to talk about some of the things we have done at the local level to fight back against human trafficking.

King County Superior Court, in partnership with the Center for Children and Youth Justice, is leading King County's most comprehensive work yet to support children who have been commercially sexually exploited. Under the leadership of Barbara Mack, the King County Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Task Force is working to develop and implement a coordinated, countywide response to childhood prostitution.

As Sheriff Urquhart just mentioned, the Sheriff's Office has played a key role in the county's effort to end human trafficking.

The King County Prosecutor's Office works diligently to prosecute cases of human trafficking. One highlight is the fact that the PAO obtained Washington State's first-ever conviction under the State's human trafficking statute, which requires prosecutors to prove that the defendant caused the victim to engage in forced labor or involuntary servitude for the defendant's personal gain.

The executive department provides some direct services to victims and has embarked on educating certain staff about human trafficking.

One significant tool for bringing human trafficking into the open is utilizing the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline. It connects callers to resources, including law enforcement and services and information about the crime of human trafficking.

For victims of human trafficking, the public posting of information and hotline phone numbers in locations where the information may be seen is critical as they might not have access to the Internet or to other forms of community-based outreach and awareness programs.

For community members, information and calls to the hotline often generate future tips and a better understanding of the red flag indicators of human trafficking.

Now, as a former Federal prosecutor, I prosecuted sex crimes, and I have been leading a series of legislative efforts in King County to bring better awareness to the National Human Trafficking Resource hotline. As you might have seen in the last year, in 2012, I drafted legislation to launch a public information campaign utilizing metro buses to display the human trafficking national hotline number throughout King County.

King County's efforts were multiplied through a partnership with private-sector media companies that included Clear Channel Media and Titan, as well as the City of Seattle, with strategically placed billboards along roads in certain locations across Western Washington. So there were $200,000 worth of pro bono billboard advertising provided, and over 200 metro buses where the signs were.

The antitrafficking campaign was displayed all over King County, including more than 200 buses, and those buses covered 2,134 square miles in King County with a population of over 2 million.

The public information campaign raised awareness of the signs of human trafficking, leading to an increase in local call volume to the National Human Trafficking hotline. And we estimate that at

least 17 of these calls were crisis calls identifying human trafficking situations. And that is 17 lives that were potentially saved as well.

We are still working hard to highlight the national hotline number across King County. I have introduced legislation with the County Council that calls for the placement of human trafficking public awareness materials in all of our county facilities, such as public health clinics, transit centers, courthouses, and other locations were trafficked individuals and the public may see the information. The legislation calls upon the county executive to explore information posting opportunities with all of our partners—bus shelters, clinics, hospitals—where trafficked individuals may utilize services and, in turn, see information on where to go.

The only way we can begin to get a handle on these crimes and to stem the tide is to continue to work together and attack the problem from all sides, which is what I believe you are doing here today.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. McDermott, for being here. We appreciate the work that you are doing.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dunn follows:]

Testimony of King County Councilman Reagan Dunn

Congressional Hearing Remarks

House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources

2/19/14 Auburn City Hall

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Congressman McDermott for holding this important hearing today providing some time for me to highlight some of the work King County has done to fight human trafficking.

It is estimated that between 300 and 500 children will be bought and sold in King County this year, and children as young as 11 have been known to have been sexually exploited for commercial purposes in the County.

Through the hard work of many individuals who have worked tirelessly on this issue Washington State has been a leader nationally in legislation to fight human trafficking

I wanted to take a moment here this morning to talk about some of the things we have done at a local level here at King County to fight back against human trafficking.

King County Superior Court, in partnership with the Center for Children and Youth Justice, is leading King County's most comprehensive work yet to support children who have been commercially sexually exploited. Under the leadership of Judge Barbara Mack, the King County Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Task Force is working to develop and implement a coordinated, county wide response to childhood prostitution.

The King County Sheriff's Office plays a key role in King County's human trafficking fight, which you will hear/have heard from the Sheriff today

The King County Prosecutor's Office (PAO) works diligently to prosecute cases of human trafficking. One highlight is the fact that the PAO obtained Washington State's first conviction under the state's Human Trafficking statute, which requires prosecutors to prove that the defendant caused a victim to engage in "forced labor" or "involuntary servitude" for the defendant's personal gain.

Executive departments provide some direct services to victims and have embarked upon educating certain staff about human trafficking.

One significant tool for bringing human trafficking into the open is utilizing the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline that connects callers to resources, including law enforcement, services and information about the crime of human trafficking.

For victims of human trafficking, the public posting of information and hotline phone numbers in locations where the information may be seen is critical, as they might not have access to the Internet or to other forms of community based outreach and awareness programs. For community members, information and calls to the hotline often generate future tips and a better understanding of the red-flag indicators of human trafficking.

As a former federal prosecutor, I prosecuted sex crimes and have been leading a series of legislative efforts at King County to bring better awareness to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline.

In 2012, I drafted legislation to launch a public information campaign utilizing Metro buses to display the human trafficking national hotline number throughout King County. King County's efforts were multiplied through partnerships with private sector media companies Clear Channel Media and Titan as well as with the City of Seattle, which strategically placed billboards along roads in certain locations across Western Washington.

The anti-trafficking campaign was displayed on the outside of more than 200 Metro and Sound Transit buses as well as on smaller signage inside the buses. The buses covered 2,134 square miles of King County with a population of over 2 million people. The public information campaign raised awareness of the signs of human trafficking, leading to an increase in local call volume to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. Estimates are that at least 17 of these calls were crisis calls identifying potential human trafficking situations.

We are still working hard to highlight the national hotline number across King County. I've introduced legislation at the King County Council that calls for the placement of human trafficking public awareness materials in county facilities such as, public health clinics, transit centers, courthouses, and other locations where trafficked individuals and the public may see the information.

The legislation also calls upon the County Executive to explore information posting opportunities with the County's many partners, such as community clinics, shelters, and hospitals, where trafficked individuals may utilize services and in turn see information about who to turn to for help.

The only way we can begin to get a handle on these crimes and stem the tide is to continue to work together and attack the problem from all sides, and I believe that is just what we are doing.

I thank you again Mr. Chairman for being here today, for holding this important hearing, and for all you are doing in Washington DC to find ways to protect children from becoming victims.

I would also like to thank the other stakeholders here this morning for their efforts and for their important testimony. Working hand in hand we can find ways to stop these crimes in their tracks.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Chairman REICHERT. Thank you, Councilman Dunn.
Ms. Gomez, you are recognized for your testimony.

STATEMENT OF NOEL GOMEZ, COFOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF SURVIVOR SERVICES, SEATTLE ORGANIZATION FOR PROSTITUTION SURVIVORS

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for having me here today. My name is Noel Gomez, and I am a survivor of sex trafficking, and also the cofounder of the Organization for Prostitution Survivors and the director of Survivor Services. I am here to talk a little bit about myself and what we are doing.

I grew up in a middle-class family in Kirkland. Everything was normal from the outside. There was a lot of alcoholism and violence in the homes that I grew up in. And when I was 12, some sexual abuse happened, and that is when things really started changing for me.

I started using drugs and drinking alcohol to deal with everything that was going on at home and everything that was going on with what had happened to me, and I ended up getting pregnant at 16.

My father wanted to put me into foster care and basically get rid of me. He tried to force me to sign papers saying that I would go to foster care and basically that didn't happen, and he told me just to leave and not come back, and I never did.

So I left home when I was 16 years old and I was pregnant.

Once I had my child, his father's family took custody of him, and then I was pretty much on my own for the rest of the time. I lived my teenage years much like many foster care youth do. I ran from here to there, living where I could and getting involved in the juvenile justice system.

The difference between me and a foster care youth in the juvenile justice system is I would get out, because as far as they knew, I wasn't State-dependent. My friends, the foster care kids, would have to stay in juvie until they found a placement for them, which would be a foster home for them to go to.

So anyway, usually, the youth that I knew would go and then run right away, just because they felt like they had found their families on the street and didn't want to be somewhere where they didn't feel like they were wanted or belong. It wasn't their family.

So anyway, I met a guy. I met a young man who appeared to have it all. He had the car, the apartment, the alcohol, everything, the money. He became my boyfriend and ended up being a very violent pimp that was very well-known in Seattle during that time. He was later murdered in prison, because he was prosecuted in 2000 for trafficking minors.

Anyway, he ended up pimping me and trafficking me from State to State. We went all around the West Coast for about 4 years. I don't have time to go into detail about my life, but I can tell you it was like living in the middle of a war zone at all times, never knowing who was going to try to kill me or who was going to rape me next, and that included my trafficker.

My story is similar to the story that I hear over and over again from the girls who have been trafficked. They say they want to be with their real families and they don't want to be in the system. They don't want to live in a foster home, especially after everything they have been through. They need special services at this point.

Without offering services, we can change laws and do things, and that is wonderful, but we need to offer services to these youth and the women and girls and boys who have been through this.

I ended up being stuck in the life for 15 years. I had no resources, nobody to turn to. There were no services. It was the hardest transition of my life.

I didn't have any skills. I didn't have a resume. I didn't have an education. I didn't have anything.

I got away from my pimp after 4 years, after attempting to escape many times. Once he found me and handcuffed me in broad daylight, threw me in the trunk of his car and kept me in there for hours, and I woke up in Portland.

So getting away from him was not an easy thing to do.

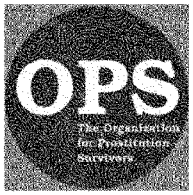
Nine years ago, I decided I was leaving the life, no matter what, and I was determined to do it. I got my first job in a bar, because a friend of mine worked there and was able to get me a job.

Since then, my life has become about helping women and girls and boys in the life to get out and get the help that they need.

Our organization offers survivor support groups, art workshops, drop-in services, that we need to be doing much, much more of. So I decided to start OPS because I know there were no services for anybody that was coming out of the life. So that is what we are doing.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Gomez follows:]



The Organization for Prostitution Survivors (OPS)
A SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY AND AN
AGENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Testimony of Noel Gomez, CDP
Co-Founder and Director of Survivor Services
The Organization for Prostitution Survivors (OPS)

U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Human Resources

Field Hearing on
Efforts to Prevent and Address Child Sex Trafficking in Washington State
February 19, 2014

Good morning Chairman Reichert and Congressman McDermott. My name is Noel Gomez. I am a survivor of sex trafficking, and after almost 15 years I was able to escape and begin my work of helping others to do the same. I am grateful that you are holding this hearing today to focus on how we can end sex trafficking and protect youth in foster care from becoming victims of this crime.

Since escaping, I have completed my Associate's degree, I received a state certification as a Chemical Dependency Counselor, and I also completed my Bachelor's degree in Social Justice at Antioch University. I have spent several years working with youth involved in the criminal justice system, many of them in the system because of prostitution. I have worked as an advocate for youth that have been and, or are being sexually exploited through prostitution. I have also been facilitating the Sex Industry Workers class for the City of Seattle for over three years. I am the co-founder of The Organization for Prostitution Survivors, an organization I started to help sexually exploited people get the help that they need and assist people in this life to exit if that is what they choose.

The Organization for Prostitution Survivors (OPS) was founded to address the harm of prostitution, and create opportunities for adult women in Seattle to seek supportive services and heal from the gender-based violence. OPS has three focus areas: Survivor Services, Community Education, and Men's Accountability, with all aspects centered on the voices and leadership of survivors.

When I co-founded OPS, I recognized an acute lack of services for adult survivors of prostitution while working at YouthCare's Bridge program and facilitating the Sex Industry Workers Class for the City of Seattle. This acute lack of services inspired me to create OPS, and I collaborated with Peter Qualliotine and other survivors and allies in Seattle to establish OPS in the spring of 2012.

In the past year, several services for women have been established, including weekly drop-in, survivor-led support group, and Art Workshops. Through peer mentoring and empowerment-based advocacy, OPS walks alongside survivors as they identify their needs. We create a non-judgmental environment where survivors are supported to engage in critical dialogue about their experiences, and begin to heal. OPS is a social service agency, and an agent of social change. Ending the harm of prostitution for future generations of women and girls requires changing the social and cultural norms that support it and all other types of violence against women.

Support Group

We offer services to individuals in or out of the life of prostitution. We do not judge, only support. We honor survivors as the experts on their own experiences and support their unique strengths as individuals. We work alongside them to identify their needs and build a vision for the rest of their lives.

The needs for the first programs of OPS were identified early on. Thus OPS created a support group and a drop-in center as the first of its services. As survivors, we all know what it feels like to feel alone or like there is no one that can really understand how we are feeling. OPS offers a place to seek support and understanding that only other survivors can offer. Everyone needs to feel understood, empowered, and appreciated.

Our experiences may look different but we all share a common journey, and OPS support group offers a safe space to talk about that journey – no matter where you are at. We host our support group each Monday evening, and we also host two "drop-in" days, one on Tuesday evenings and one on Thursday afternoon.

Art Workshops

The therapeutic benefits of making art and creative self-expression are vast and they have been well documented especially where trauma and dissociation are concerned. Some of the benefits of art are that it can help increase self-regulation and healthy coping, increase self-esteem, create a sense of belonging and purpose, increase resilience, self-acceptance, self-efficacy and self-care. Our workshops function on a drop-in basis and include a hot meal, time for socializing, movement, poetry, and visual and experiential art.

The healing practice of art is integrative; addressing the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of human experience. Our work is relational as it unfolds in a safe all-inclusive space where participants are invited to explore the intrapersonal (artist with self), interpersonal (artist with other artist/participant/facilitator/ally), and transpersonal (artist with and part of the collective/group). Our modality is firmly rooted in empowerment, community-building and unconditional positive-regard and love.

Our goal is to open a gallery space and shop where our artists can exhibit their work, generate income, secure employment and further expand their role and participation in the local artistic and business community if they so choose.

Men's Accountability
When people think about or talk about prostitution, the central issue they consider is often about the "agency" of the person being prostituted and whether prostitution is a free choice or is forced. This focus distracts us from the issue of men's accountability and never addresses the more fundamental question of why so many men believe they are entitled to pay for sex in the first place. Part of the nature of prostitution is that the buyer is paying to not hear about the reality of the prostituted person. If he is paying, he cannot be sure that there is consent to whatever sexual activity he is seeking. As survivors, we know that prostituted people do not want to have sex with buyers. That is why we call them "tricks". Women and children are prostituted for many reasons. Rarely is prostitution "freely chosen" by those who are prostituted. Men, however, possess the power and privilege to choose whether they engage in prostitution or not. OPS encourages men to be allies to women and children and to reject identifying with systems of dominance.

I am grateful for the opportunity I have had to testify about this important topic, and for the work this committee is doing to prevent youth from becoming victims of sex trafficking.

This completes my testimony today, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Chairman REICHERT. Ms. Gomez, thank you so much for your testimony. I know that everybody in this room, you could hear a pin drop as you were telling your story. And sadly, this is not a unique story.

Ms. GOMEZ. Not at all.

Chairman REICHERT. So I thank you so much for having the courage to be here today and share that with us.

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you.

Chairman REICHERT. Ms. Urwiler, you are recognized for your testimony.

STATEMENT OF MANDY URWILER, SENIOR NETWORK REPRESENTATIVE, THE MOCKINGBIRD SOCIETY

Ms. URWILER. Thank you. Hello, Congressman Reichert and Congressman McDermott. Thank you both for your time and effort on the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Improving Opportunities for Youth in Foster Care Act. It is a really long name.

My name is Mandy Urwiler, and I work for the Mockingbird Society. I am 19 years old, and I entered foster care when I was 15. I am still in foster care now, thanks to the Extended Foster Care program.

I could tell you several stories about when people tried to get me to turn a trick for them, but there is one in particular I would like to share.

I was 13 and I had just been expelled from my previous school because of complications while running away from home. Consequently, I started attending an alternative school for juvenile court-involved youth. I quickly learned that many of my classmates were pimps and drug dealers.

On my second day at that school, they asked me to be their whore and make them money. I said no, but they kept pushing. After class let out, they followed me home, continuously telling me that they needed me and I could make good money.

I went to class the next day and was still being pressured, but I held my ground.

This time, when class let out for the day, I was beaten brutally for saying no. I was shoved down and kicked while I was on the ground. I was punched and had my head slammed into the concrete. But I still said no.

When I went home that night, still being followed by my attackers, I told my dad what happened. That may have been the only time I ever saw my divorced parents agree on something, and that was to pull me out of that school.

I was lucky because, in this case, it was a situation I could get away from.

Not every young person living in foster care or in a group home gets that chance, especially when they are a minor and may not have a trusted adult advocating for them. Sometimes, especially if the youth have run and are living on the streets, the pimps are adult predators who are more sophisticated and brutal than the young group that came after me.

Sometimes the youth being pressured doesn't have the support wrapped around them to help them resist the way I did.

I saw girls who had run away from their foster homes and were arrested for prostitution. I later talked to them and found out they were afraid to leave the life because they had been assaulted. They weren't given help to escape the clutches of these evil people who

hurt them. Instead, they were treated as criminals by the police. I believe that they were victims, not criminals.

I met these girls who were my age and even younger, and saw what could have happened to me. I don't want to ever, ever have to see that again, because no one should have to go through that. I don't want anyone else to have to make the decision between injury and sel1ing their bodies.

This is an epidemic that needs to stop. We say children who are removed from their families will be safe from further abuse and neglect. We must protect vulnerable youth in care from predators like the ones who hurt me.

As a strategy for preventing sex trafficking, this bill addresses the topic of normalcy for foster youth. I am happy to see that this bil1 encourages States to adopt a prudent parent standard to support normal life experiences for youth in care, which is an effort that is already underway here in Washington State.

I believe if youth had more opportunities to do normal things they want to do without fear of running into barriers, less youth would run from care.

When I was in my foster home, my foster parents couldn't sign for the simplest of things, like school field trips, job fairs, and college tours, and this negatively impacted my grades, and I lost opportunities to explore educational and career opportunities and resources.

But field trips aren't the only things I missed out on. I never got to spend the night with friends, because my foster parents were afraid of the liability. I didn't get my learner's permit from the State for the same reason.

And in my experience, this path that leads too many foster youth to be preyed upon is driven by a lack of control, opportunity, and support.

I believe this bill will help youth by giving them more input and control in their lives by allowing foster parents to give their youth access to opportunities that are taken for granted by others, and by giving youth who have already started down a dangerous path a way out.

I ask the subcommittee to maintain its commitment to the pieces of this bill that reinforce control, opportunity, and support for youth in care.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Urwiler follows:]

Amanda Urwiler Testimony 2/19/2014
Preventing Sex Trafficking and Improving Opportunities for Youth in Foster Care Act
Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee – Chairman Representative Reichert

Hello Congressman Reichert and Congressman McDermott. Thank you both for your time and effort on the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Improving Opportunities for Youth in Foster Care Act. My name is Mandy Urwiler and I am employed at the Mockingbird Society. I am 19 years old, and I entered foster care when I was 15. I am still in foster care thanks to the Extended Foster Care program.

I could tell several stories about when people tried to get me to turn a trick for them – this was an experience I encountered throughout my young adulthood before, and during my time in foster care. But there is one time in particular I'd like to share.

I was 13 and had just been expelled from my previous school because of complications while running away from home. Consequently, I started attending the Alder Academy in Seattle, which is an alternative school for juvenile court involved youth. I quickly learned that many of my classmates were pimps and drug dealers.

On my second day at the school, they asked me to go be their whore and make them money. They said I could just get the money upfront and run away, but I knew that wouldn't work, and I didn't want to sell my body. I said no, but they kept pushing. After class let out, they followed me home, continuously telling me they needed me to and I could make good money.

The next day, I went to class, and was still being pressured, but I held my ground. This time when class let out for the day, I was beaten brutally for saying no. I was shoved down and kicked while I was on the ground. I was punched and had my head slammed into the ground... But I still said no.

When I went home that night, still being followed by my attackers, I told my dad what happened. That may have been the only time I ever saw my divorced parents

agree on something: to pull me out of that school. I was lucky because, in this case, it was a situation I could get away from.

But not every young person living in foster care or in a group home gets that chance. Leaving your group home is no simple thing – especially when you are a minor and may not have a trusted adult advocating for you. Sometimes, especially if you have run and are living on the streets, the pimps are adult predators who are more sophisticated and brutal than the young group that came after me. And sometimes the youth being pressured simply doesn't have the support wrapped around them to help them resist the way I did.

I saw girls who had run away from their foster homes and were arrested for prostitution. I later talked to them about it and found out they were afraid to leave "the life" because they were beaten and threatened. They weren't given help to escape the clutches of these evil people who hurt them – and they were treated as criminals by the authorities. It's my belief that they were victims. I met these girls who were my age or even younger, and I saw what could have happened to me. I don't want to ever have to see that again because no one should ever have to go through that kind of abuse and criminalization. I don't want anyone else to have to make the choice between severe injury or death and selling their bodies.

This is an epidemic that needs to stop. We say that children who are removed from their families will be safe from further abuse and neglect. So we must protect vulnerable youth in care from predators like the ones who hurt me.

As a strategy for preventing sex trafficking, this bill addresses the topic of Normalcy for foster youth. I am very happy to see that the bill encourages states to adopt a Prudent Parent Standard to support normal life experiences for youth in care. An effort that is already underway here in Washington State.

I believe if youth had more opportunities to do normal things they want to do – and that their peers in healthy families do – without the fear of running into barriers, less youth would run away from care. When I was in my foster home, my foster parents couldn't sign for the simplest of things, like school field trips to job fairs and college tours. My social worker couldn't get back to me in time, so I never got to do those things. This negatively impacted my grades, and I lost opportunities to explore educational and career resources. Even now, I'm struggling to decide on my next step with school. I've thought about pursuing a career in healthcare, trying for a PHD in engineering or theoretical physics, going to law school, or studying public affairs. This may be normal confusion for a 19 year old – but I do believe

that if I had access to the full range of opportunities in school that field trips and other enrichment activities would have given me, I may have a clearer idea of where I am going.

Field trips aren't the only things I missed out on. I never got to spend the night with friends because my foster parents were afraid of the liability. I didn't get my learners permit through the state because they didn't want the liability- I used one of my visits home to have my dad take me to the Department of Licensing (DOL) and sign the form. But even then, I couldn't practice except on my weekly visits because, again, my foster parents were afraid of getting in trouble.

In my experience, the path that leads too many foster youth to be preyed upon is driven by a lack of control, a lack of opportunity and a lack of support. I believe this bill will help youth by giving them more input and control around their case plan, by allowing foster parents to give their youth access to opportunities that are taken for granted by others, and by giving youth who have already started down a dangerous path a way out. I ask the subcommittee to maintain its commitment to the pieces of this bill that reinforce control, opportunity and support for youth in care.

Chairman REICHERT. Thank you for your testimony.

To both of you, thank you for your courage and your willingness to be here today to share your stories with us.

Ms. Rains, you are recognized for your 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF DAWN RAINS, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, TREEHOUSE

Ms. RAINS. Thank you for inviting me to testify before you today. My name is Dawn Rains, and I serve as the chief operating officer of Treehouse, a Seattle-based nonprofit serving foster care youth in Washington State. I am also a former foster parent.

At Treehouse, our mission is giving foster kids a childhood and a future. We are a major partner with Washington State's child welfare system, providing foster youth with individualized academic support, access to critical extracurricular activities and community resources, and material needs, like clothes, toys, and school supplies at our free store, the Wearhouse. We provide this support to over 6,000 foster youth in Washington State every year.

We have set an ambitious goal that foster youth in King County will graduate high school at the same rate as their peers with a plan for the future by 2017. Currently, only half of youth and foster care graduate high school on time and fewer than 2 percent will earn a 4-year college degree.

Without a high school diploma and a plan for the future, foster youth experience disproportionately high rates of poverty, homelessness, incarceration, mental illness, substance abuse, and sexual exploitation when they age out of foster care or are missing from care.

We are pleased to endorse the proposed legislation. Children come into foster care through no fault of their own. We as a com-

munity have a special responsibility to kids in foster care, and this proposed legislation improves future prospects for youth in our community.

For my testimony, I would like to focus on two of the major provisions of the bill that we are particularly passionate about.

The first is how youth-centered planning is essential to building foster youth engagement and investment in their future. We support empowering every youth to participate in planning their own future and transition from foster care and to begin that process at the age of 14. Current transition planning in Washington State child welfare is compliance-and-checklist-oriented and begins too late to have the most powerful impact. Starting in 2012, Treehouse began implementing youth-centered, or what we call student-centered, planning with middle- and high-school aged youth in foster care as part of our academic support program called Graduation Success.

Student-centered planning is an evidence-based practice designed to elicit and inspire youth's own plan for the future within the context of support from the adults in their lives. When youth set their own course, they build self-determination, resilience, and problem-solving skills that lead to confidence and self-sufficiency as young adults.

While student-centered planning is much more labor-intensive than what public system social workers are typically able to provide, we believe that the impact will be powerful in building aspirational and proactive behavior that leads to better life outcomes.

So how does this work in the field? Every youth in Treehouse's Graduation Success program has an education specialist that provides them with a critical stable adult presence in their lives and partners with social workers, caregivers, and schools to monitor academic progress and ensure that they receive services tailored to their individual needs.

Foster youth work together with their education specialist to define aspirational goals and educational milestones that will help the youth stay on track to achieve those goals.

They then provide coaching to develop positive mindset and drive progress toward meeting goals in their plans.

Education specialists are uniquely situated in a critical role if youth should be at risk or actually go on the run, and they are being trained on how to identify the risk factors associated with sexual exploitation to support and redirect these youth.

If youth should go on the run, they oftentimes keep in touch with our staff and/or visit our Wearhouse to stock up on clothes as their first stop when they run from care.

We are currently working with DSHS Children Administration's Missing from Care workgroup to strategize how to locate and re-engage these youth in support services.

We see every youth in foster care is at risk of poor or failing outcomes and believe each need an education specialist.

We are currently serving over 500 middle school and high school youth in King County in our Graduation Success program and are on course to fully saturate the population of foster youth in King County.

The second major provision of the bill that I would like to address is the importance of creating normalcy in the lives of youth in foster care for improved outcomes.

We applaud the empowerment of licensed foster parents and relative caregivers via a reasonable and prudent parent standard, which would allow them to make day-to-day decisions about a youth's ability to participate in normal childhood experiences like sleepovers with friends, school field trips, summer camps, and extracurricular activities.

Currently, bureaucratic barriers impede court and social worker efforts and frustrate caregivers without adding value for youth. Normal childhood activities are foundational experiences that help youth develop interests, skills, and dreams for the future. The relationships and connections that are built doing these activities contribute to a youth's sense of belonging, their mental health, and well-being.

At Treehouse our Little Wishes program helps to create normalcy for kids in foster care by giving them access to self-selected activities and experiences. This is a critical piece of our model because we know kids who are positively engaged in school and community have better academic and life outcomes. We also know that these activities build a critical protective factor that make youth less vulnerable to exploitation and sex trafficking.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Rains follows:]

Testimony of Dawn Rains
Chief Operating Officer, Treehouse
Before the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means on Efforts to Prevent and Address Child Sex Trafficking in Washington State
February 19, 2014

Chairman Reichert, ranking member Jim McDermott, and members of the Subcommittee on Human Resources:

Thank you for inviting me to testify before you today. My name is Dawn Rains and I currently serve as the Chief Operating Officer of Treehouse, a Seattle-based non-profit serving youth in foster care in Washington State. I have been the strategic and operational leader for Treehouse Programs and Marketing since August of 2012, and prior to that served as the Director of Development & Marketing since 2009. I have more than 20 years of experience in nonprofit management. I am also a former foster parent.

At Treehouse, our mission is giving foster kids a childhood and a future. We envision – and strive to create – a world where every child that has experienced foster care has the opportunities and supports they need to pursue their dreams and become productive members of our community.

I look forward to talking to you today about the challenges that youth in foster care currently face, and how Treehouse is investing in building a road to hope and possibility for our kids toward the bright future that they equally deserve. Specifically, I would like to focus on two key issues related to Treehouse programming and our organizational goals, as well as the proposed legislation:

- How youth-centered planning builds foster youth's engagement and investment in their future leading to successful transitions to adulthood.
- The importance of supporting the well-being of youth in foster care by creating normalcy in their lives.

Before I discuss these key issues, though, I'll provide you with a brief history of Treehouse and the challenges that foster youth currently face in our community.

A Brief History of Treehouse

Treehouse was founded in 1988 by DSHS social workers who saw the deprivation often faced by children in foster care. They held bake sales and car washes so they could provide the little things needed to help children feel loved and capable. These small efforts have blossomed with the support of tens of thousands of generous donors and many caring and committed partners across our community.

Today, Treehouse provides access to critical extracurricular activities and community resources through our Little Wishes program and clothes, toys, and school supplies at our free store, the Wearhouse – bringing support to 6,000 youth who have experienced foster care each year. Treehouse is a major partner with Washington State's child welfare system, providing innovative whole-child development programming that is built on what works.

Over the years, we have also piloted a wide range of education support services for youth in care, and in 2012 Treehouse embarked on the most important work yet: helping foster youth in King County graduate high school at the same rate as their peers with a plan for their future. Treehouse's graduation equity goal addresses the alarmingly high dropout rate among high school students in foster care. Building on a quarter century of practice and the best research available, Treehouse is addressing this problem in an efficient, scalable, and replicable manner. Treehouse is uniquely committed to partnering with school systems, government agencies, caregivers, social workers, and funders to change the trajectory of kids in foster care by helping them make it to graduation day and beyond. The goal of our educational program, *Graduation Success*, is to help **foster youth in King County graduate at the same rate as their peers with a plan for their future by 2017.**

The Challenges Foster Care Youth & Alumni Face

At this very moment, there are more than 9,000 children in foster care in Washington State. Life in foster care can be extraordinarily challenging and disruptive for kids and teens, emotionally and developmentally. Separated from their family, foster youth face tremendous obstacles in school and in life. Research shows that kids in foster care suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder at a higher rate than returning combat war veterans,

and more than half struggle with mental health challenges stemming from the trauma they've endured[1]. Academically, foster youth face an uphill battle due to changes in home placements and school transitions, lack of basic skills, and emotional upheaval. With each transition, it's estimated that foster youth lose four to six months of academic progress.[2] They fall behind their peers on every educational measure, including grades, test scores, attendance and discipline referrals.[2] Access to important socialization opportunities – like music lessons and team sports – is limited, as is access to funding for essential needs like clothing, shoes, school supplies, haircuts, and funding for school fees.

Currently, only half of foster youth in King County graduate from high school and fewer than 2% will earn a four-year degree.[3] Without a high school diploma and a plan for their future, foster youth experience disproportionately high rates of poverty, homelessness, incarceration, mental illness, unplanned pregnancy, substance abuse, and sexual exploitation when they age out or are missing from care. Nearly 25% of those leaving foster care will be homeless as adults;[4] 33% live below the poverty line; and they will receive public assistance at five times the national rate.[3] Children come into foster care through no fault of their own. We as a community have a special responsibility to kids in foster care to help them receive the same opportunities as other kids so they can graduate high school and pursue their dreams.

Building Bright Futures through *Graduation Success*

Treehouse supports empowering youth in foster care age 14 or older to participate in developing their own case plan, and selecting the individuals they want to be a part of their planning team. Current transition planning in Washington State child welfare is compliance and checklist oriented. Treehouse's *Graduation Success* program is implementing youth-centered planning or what we call student-centered planning with middle and high school aged youth in foster care. Student-centered planning is an evidence-based practice designed to elicit and inspire youth's own plans for their future within a context of support from the adults in their lives. When youth set their own course,

[1] Casey Family Programs (2011)
[2] Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2001)
[3] Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2013).
[4] Casey Family Programs (2005).

they build self-determination, resilience and problem-solving skills that lead to confidence and self-sufficiency as young adults. While student-centered planning is much more labor intensive than what the public system social workers typically provide, we believe the impact will be powerful in building aspiration and proactive behavior that leads to better life outcomes.

The *Graduation Success* program combines the evidence-based practices of Check & Connect and Student-Centered Planning that are proven to move youth toward high school graduation and a successful adulthood with elements that address the unique needs of youth in foster care. The *Graduation Success* program model is built specifically for foster youth. Through *Graduation Success*, Treehouse Education Specialists provide a critical stable adult presence in each student's life, partnering with social workers, caregivers, and schools, monitoring academic progress, helping youth build their own student-centered plan for the future, and serving as the "quarterback" of a network of support.

Graduation Success is based on a program model we call *ABC Plus*.

ABC Plus summarizes the six factors that lead to a successful high school graduation. The first three are tracked by schools and form the basis of an early warning indicator system:

- A is for regular class attendance
- B is for good behavior
- C is for adequate course performance

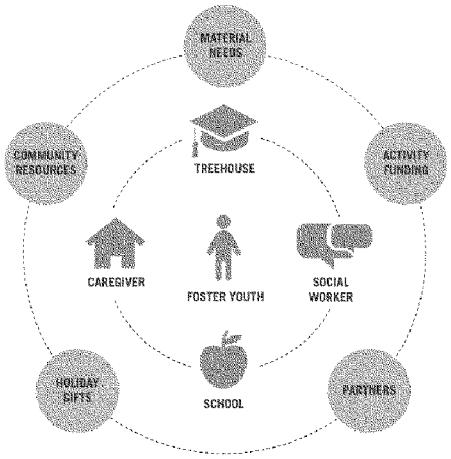
The "Plus" in our model refers to elements that research and practice have identified as critical for youth in foster care:

- Meaningful participation in an extra-curricular activity
- Non-academic factors: a sense of engagement and self-determination
- A student-centered plan for the future[5]

By keeping each student on track with positive indicators in each of these areas, *ABC Plus* keeps foster kids on the path toward high school graduation and the bright future they've planned.

[5] University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (2012).

Graduation Success Model:



Our model delivers customized interventions and support to help every student succeed in every one of these six areas of focus. Each student we serve is at the center of our services. Every youth works with a Treehouse Education Specialist who makes sure that she receives appropriate, rapidly-delivered services tailored to her individual developmental needs.

Treehouse Education Specialists begin by partnering with social workers and caregivers to create a portrait of each youth's needs. Then, the Education Specialist gets to know each student through ongoing, supportive weekly meetings. Together they create a student-centered plan to define aspirational goals and the educational milestones that the youth will need to achieve to stay on track toward those goals. Student-centered planning provides youth with the opportunity for their voices to be heard and for them to create personally meaningful goals. Research shows that youth whose educational plans align with their interests are more motivated to accomplish their goals than those expected to

follow plans others make for them[6]. In addition, student-centered planning builds self-determination skills which are linked to a foster youth's ability to overcome barriers throughout their transition to adulthood[7].

The Education Specialist works with each student and a Treehouse In-School "Check and Connect" Mentor to monitor *ABC Plus* progress and choose appropriate interventions and services from Treehouse or our partners. "Check and Connect," is an evidence-based comprehensive student engagement intervention that improves kids staying in school and has the potential to improve school progress according to the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse[8]. Check and Connect interventions have also demonstrated to improve graduation rates for youth[9]. Attendance, behavior, and course performance are systematically monitored in the "check" component by the in-school mentor. The "connect" component is comprised of the wide range of individualized short- and long-term interventions that are delivered by Education Specialists, who maintain a consistent relationship with the youth to get and keep kids on track toward their goals. A well-timed school meeting involving all of the providers and family members in a youth's life can change the trajectory from failure to success. In situations where a more emergent need arises – such as a behavior issue that leads to suspension, or a need for specialized supports at school – Treehouse uses its tested *Education Advocacy* intervention to prevent or reduce time out of class and keep kids in school.

We leverage partners and volunteers through targeted referrals that align with each student's individualized plan. When a student needs specialized services, such as tutoring, counseling, and college preparation, we connect the student to the appropriate community resource or a Treehouse volunteer and monitor progress. Formal partnerships with the State and school districts leverage additional support and information-sharing.

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[6] Lindstrom, L., Paskey, J., Dickinson, J., Doren, B., Zane, C., & Johnson, P. *The Journal for Vocational Special Needs Education*, (2007)

[7] Powers, L. E., Geenen, S., Powers, J., Pommier-satya, S., Turner, A., Dalton, L. D., Drummond, D., et al. *Children and Youth Services Review*, (2012)

[8] http://ies.ed.gov

[9] Appleton, J., Christenson, S. L., & Furlong, M. J., *Psychology in the Schools*, (2008)

Education Specialists work with a Treehouse team to keep kids engaged in our unique services such as Little Wishes, which funds and coordinates extra-curricular engagement and additional learning opportunities, and the Wearhouse, which provides free clothing and school supplies. We also give every youth in foster care a holiday gift to reinforce the feeling of being valued and cared for.

An Education Specialist is the year-round "quarterback" of this network, providing coaching to develop a positive mindset and drive progress towards meeting the goals in the student-centered plan. Education Specialists guide a collective effort that surrounds each student with critical resources focused on helping the student achieve success.

Education Specialists are often times the one significant, consistent adult presence in a foster youth's life. They are uniquely situated in a critical role if a youth should be at risk of or actually go on the run. In the spring of 2014 Education Specialists are being trained on how to identify the risk factors associated with sexual exploitation and how to support and redirect these youth including engaging them with extracurricular activities. If a youth should go on the run, they often times keep in touch with our staff and/or visit our Wearhouse to stock up on resources, and we are currently working together with DSHS Children Administration's Missing from Care Committee to strategize how to locate and re-engage these youth in support services.

Supporting Normalcy for Youth in Foster Care

Treehouse supports the empowerment of licensed foster parents and relative caregivers via a reasonable and prudent parent standard, which would allow them to make more day-to-day decisions about youth's ability to participate in normal childhood and youth experiences like family vacations, friend sleepovers, school field trips, summer camp and more. Currently, bureaucratic barriers impede court and social worker efforts and frustrate caregivers without adding value for youth.

Normal childhood experiences are foundational experiences that help youth develop interests, skills and dreams for the future. The relationships and connections that are built doing these activities, as well as the exposure to the activities themselves contribute to a

youth's sense of belonging in their school or community, their mental health and well-being.[10] As a part of the Treehouse student-centered planning process, Education Specialists ask foster youth to identify extra-curricular activities that would be of interest to them. These short-term goals are fulfilled by the Treehouse Wearhouse and Little Wishes programs which provide appropriate attire, equipment and help with funding for extra-curricular opportunities. This is a critical piece of our model because we know that kids who are positively engaged in school and community have better academic and life outcomes. We also know these activities build a critical protective factor, that make youth less vulnerable to exploitation and sex trafficking. The 1998 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health found that perceived connectedness is a protective factor against eight health-compromising behaviors[11]. In contrast, a lack of a sense of belonging has been linked to school violence, risky sexual behavior and drug use[12].

Measuring *Graduation Success* Performance

Treehouse tracks key performance indicators on overall capacity, student performance toward graduation, and the impact of each team on the students they serve.

Performance tracking in Graduation Success captures:

- Graduation rates
- Students "on track to graduate" – they have the grades and course credits to lead them to graduation
- The six ABC Plus factors

Our Education Specialists receive extensive on-going training and coaching. Fidelity of implementation is assured through routine observations of fieldwork, case reviews, annual performance reviews, and comprehensive data monitoring. Program efficacy is monitored through prudent evaluation and impact measurement.

[10] Townsend, K. C., & Mcwhirter, B. T., *Journal of Counseling &Development*,(2005)

[11] Resnick, M. D., Bearman, P. S., Blum, R. W., Bauman, K. E., Harris, K. M., Jones, J., et al. In R. E. Muuss & H. D. Porton (Eds.), Adolescent behavior and society: A book of readings, (1998)

[12] Whitlock, J. L., *Applied Developmental Science*,(2006)

We see every youth in foster care as at risk of poor or failing outcomes and believe each needs an Educational Specialist. We are currently serving over 500 middle and high school youth in King County, and are on course to fully saturate the population of foster youth in our community. We are fully committed to transparently demonstrating results, learning from our experience and modifying the strategy to achieve educational outcomes for foster youth on parity or better than their peer group. We look forward to reporting the impact of this strategy with youth in foster care in the future.

Conclusion

Chairman Reichert and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify today. At Treehouse we are whole-heartedly invested in the pursuit of equity for every youth in foster care and believe that we can help change their future trajectory avoiding tragic outcomes like sex trafficking. We thank you for considering this legislation to help support this effort. I look forward to answering questions you might have about our work, and Treehouse looks forward to partnering with members of the Subcommittee and others to ensure a bright future for youth in foster care.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Rains
Chief Operating Officer

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TREEHOUSEFORKIDS.ORG

Chairman REICHERT. Thank you for your testimony. One of the things that is a little different about having a hearing here in the district is that when the timer goes off, people stop talking.

[Laughter.]

Chairman REICHERT. Back in Washington, D.C., they just keep on going, so thank you for being so punctual and respectful of the timer.

But I know that Jim has to leave soon for another appointment, and the senator has to leave soon, too, because they are still in session. So it is especially great to have you take time out of your day here to be here. And because Jim has to leave early, we are going to start with his questioning first, and then I have a couple questions.

But, Jim, go ahead.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Thank you, Dave.

Ms. Gomez, your testimony was very compelling, but the thing that I didn't hear, and I try to figure out, you have two kinds of kids who are caught up in trafficking. You have underage kids who are out there surviving, just barely getting by. And then you have people who have been immersed in the life for a long period of time. And you said 9 years ago or something you turned a corner. Tell me how that happened. What was offered, or what did you stumble into, or who did you meet, or how did that transition occur? Because I think one of the things we struggle with is trying to figure out how do we take people who have been way into the system, how do we then help them not wind up in much worse circumstances.

Ms. GOMEZ. And that is why our organization is survivor-led and run. I think that it is important to have survivors as mentors and advocates for people who have been in the life.

For me, there was no support. I got into AA and met people in AA who had been through things like I had. And that was really the only support I had. There were no services or anything like that.

So for me, I was just so angry and so tired of it, that, you know, I just had to get out. I had to.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Was the support of AA members of a similar—it was really a support group, is what you are saying.

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes, and that is why I started specific support groups for survivors, instead of having—because AA is not for that, you know. It is for alcohol. But there are a lot of women in AA and NA who had previously been in the life. And that is how I got help, really, and support was from the recovery.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Ms. Rains, you talked about involving youngsters in their own planning. Children go into foster care all the time in this country. I mean, Dave is responsible, and I was responsible, for half a million foster kids all over the United States. And they go for different reasons. How do you set up something at the State level—or does it have to be at the county level? Or where is it set up that youngsters, somebody sits down with them and says, "Now, look, you have a bad situation at home, and you are not going home. That is not possible. So how are we going to plan for your life from here on?"

Where does that occur? Where should it occur?

Ms. RAINS. Yes, there is planning that happens in the child welfare system with their social workers. In Washington, we have what is called a 17½ meeting, where the final planning happens.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. That is too late.

Ms. RAINS. It is way too late. We would love to see that more proactive youth-involved planning happening from, again, from the age of 14 on, because youth need to see a future for themselves.

In a situation where youth in foster care give up, they have really no say or control in what is happening to them—where they live, who they live with—this is a way for them to reclaim some of that.

And we are doing it on a very local scale, with 500 youth. We would love to see that program expand statewide, because it is time-intensive. It relationship-based. We have to really form those relationships in order for youth to trust us and engage their caregivers and their social workers and the folks at school in charting a course.

As an interesting side note, someone on my staff is doing a Ph.D., and her dissertation is looking at former foster care alums who also experienced special education while they were in foster care. And she has been interviewing these young adults and almost every single one have goals and dreams and aspirations for their future, but no one taught them how to map the course to get from A to B. And that is what we are really trying to build in with the youth that we are working with.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. This is funded by your own private donations to your—and there is what? Eight thousand kids? How many kids are there in the State who are in foster care?

Ms. RAINS. Between 9,000 and 10,000.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Senator Welles, where are we going to get money to do that? What she is describing for 500 kids in one program?

Ms. KOHL-WELLES. Well, obviously, Congressman McDermott, that is an enormous challenge and is the discussion of the day in Olympia.

We have the requirements to meet the McCleary decision for fully funding K–12 education. We have increasing demands on our social safety net and higher education and transportation. And so, with our system of having—we are one of a handful of states that does not have an income tax, so we have tax issues. And we also have a very generous citizen initiative system in our State.

Legislators in many ways have our hands tied in terms of funding all of the needs that we have.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. I mean, the reason I raise this issue is that I want the people who see and hear about what happened here today to understand that doing what they are doing at Treehouse is not done on the cheap, nor is it done without money. You do need money to do that kind of stuff.

And if we are serious about trafficking, then we have to talk about money at some point, because to give social workers the time to have age 14 meetings instead of an age 17½ meetings is going to take time for people to sit down and talk with kids about where they are going to go, how are they going to do this.

Ms. KOHL-WELLES. Well, we have our revenue forecast coming out, I believe tomorrow. And we know that our State is coming out of the great recession, but it is a recovery that has been slow. We are sales-tax-reliant, have one of the most regressive if not the most regressive tax system in the country, so our revenue, it is very difficult to have a sufficient amount coming in.

But we are trying. We are making progress, and I am pleased about that.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Ms. Gomez, did anybody ever have that kind of conversation with you in your trips through juvie downtown?

Ms. GOMEZ. No.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. You didn't need to turn it on to tell me that.

[Laughter.]

Ms. GOMEZ. On the streets, there was nothing anywhere, no. Nobody.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. So when you were processed through the juvenile justice system, since you were not a foster kid and, therefore, State-dependent, they just opened the door and said goodbye.

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes. I could be released to my family, but they would give you a bus ticket.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. How about you, Ms. Urwiler? What was your experience? When did somebody start talking to you about what you might become?

Ms. URWILER. Honestly, what I have thought of on what I might become, it started before I entered foster care. I started thinking about where I wanted to go. But I never really had anybody to help guide me until I talked to my independent living case manager, which has been amazingly helpful.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. How old were you then?

Ms. URWILER. Fifteen or 16. And then from there, I have gotten help with filling out my FAFSA and all of my college forms, still a hugely confusing process, but I am still confused on where I am going. I don't know where I want to go. I thought of everything from being a doctor specializing in emergency pediatrics to getting a Ph.D. in theoretical physics or a law degree or going into polisci. I don't know where I am going.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. How old are you?

Ms. URWILER. Nineteen.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. You have a little while. You don't have to make every decision yet.

[Laughter.]

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Dave and I got into this late in life.

Thank you all very much for your testimony. And I apologize for having to leave.

Ms. KOHL-WELLES. Congressman, can I bring up one more thing I think might be helpful to other young individuals who have been facing similar experiences?

We have a very new but I think has a huge potential scholarship program in our State called College Bound. And we are able to reach out to young people in the seventh and eighth grade who are low-income. And they are able to make a pledge to keep a C average and stay in school. And if so, then they receive a scholarship from the State, which is sizable, along with other scholarships and grants that we have for the funding of their college education.

Chairman REICHERT. I thank Jim for being here today.

And, Senator, if you have another comment or two you want to make, that is fine.

Ms. KOHL-WELLES. Thank you. I would like to make one more comment before I leave.

Chairman REICHERT. Please.

Ms. KOHL-WELLES. I appreciate that.

As I mentioned earlier with the case with Backpage.com, which is an online advertiser that supposedly and admittedly makes over $21 million a year on these online adult escort services, what we ran into with having to settle the case for our legislation, our new law, was, as I mentioned, the Federal Communications Decency Act, which was enacted into law in 1996. And the Internet has grown rather sizably since that time.

So we have a measure moving through the Legislature, Senate Joint Memorial 8003, which will request Congress to amend the Federal Communications Decency Act to reflect the current scope of the Internet and take into account the role that IPOs play in the advertising and profiting from sexual exploitation of minors.

Right now, the advertisers are not responsible for third parties who advertise on them in terms of the content, and we really think there has to be a change made.

So thank you for listening to that request.

Chairman REICHERT. You are welcome. Thank you for that thought. And thank you for your testimony and your hard work.

Ms. KOHL-WELLES. Thank you.

Chairman REICHERT. It takes all of us to have an impact on tragic issues like the one we are dealing with.

Ms. KOHL-WELLES. And it is bipartisan.

Chairman REICHERT. Absolutely.

Ms. KOHL-WELLES. It completely has been unanimously passed, in terms of the legislation. Thank you.

Chairman REICHERT. Thank you. Good luck in Olympia today.

Ms. KOHL-WELLES. Thank you.

Chairman REICHERT. Well, I would just like to make a couple comments and then I have some questions, too.

First of all, I think it is important for you to know that we are having this hearing today, but as you know, we come to this all with different experiences. Jim's experience in child behavior and his work prior to Congress in understanding child behavior gives him a passion and compassion for young people, and a certain insight that is very beneficial to the Ways and Means Committee. There are other Members of the subcommittee who bring different experiences, but are also just as passionate and compassionate.

I think that is a critical thing for Americans to understand, that it is just not a machine of legislation back in Washington, D.C., with a lot of uncaring, process-oriented people.

And in my own personal experience, as most of you know, my story starts out very similar to Ms. Gomez's story, in that my family was also a home of violence and alcohol, and I ran away. But I had a football coach and a geometry teacher, which is one of the few classes that I did okay in. For some reason, I got the circles and squares and triangles.

I don't know how I did that, John.

But you know, there was a person in my life that I remember sort of grabbed me by the back of the collar and said, "Dave, you are headed down the wrong road." But where was I to go?

And I lived in a car for a while when I was a senior in high school. I was one of the fortunate ones that didn't get sucked into the rest of the lifestyle.

But then I became a police officer and saw it as a 21-year-old police officer on the street. And as John said, Sheriff Urquhart said, that it is not a nostalgic time to remember back to. It is a sad time to recall how people were treated and the thought process that not only police officers but the entire community really held toward people who were on the street.

And then when I began Green River, I was only 31 years old, by the way, and I had dark brown hair then, believe it or not.

[Laughter.]

Chairman REICHERT. Thirty-one years old, and that was the beginning of 19 years of working with young ladies like you.

And the story that you told, again, I want to make clear to the audience and people who might hopefully listen to the testimony today, is not a unique story.

And the difficulty we have in trying to convince young people to please leave the streets because of the danger we knew that lurked out there in the presence of a man who is now in prison for 49 consecutive life terms, but not only him, others.

As you said, Ms. Gomez, the life that our young people are leading that have left their homes, whether foster children are not, have left violent and dysfunctional homes and end up on the street in the arms of people like some of the descriptions that we heard today—I don't even like to mention his name—is a battle. It is a war. And they are in a world of violence.

Imagine 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 years old and that is your life.

So I am so grateful for you and the work that you do.

And, Mandy, what did you want to be? I think a rocket scientist?

[Laughter.]

Chairman REICHERT. I hope that you make that. You have hope, and you both have hope. And we all go through struggles and now you are applying that struggle to help people.

So my question, first of all, goes to the sheriff and to the councilman. I think Washington State is known for being a collaborative state. State, local, and city governments work together a lot on issues. And you have described some of the ways you are working.

Where do you see your efforts in working together going from here? What are the next steps? What do you see in bringing all this together, because I know back when I was in the Sheriff's Office and even in this job, it seems to me that there are so many programs and plans and people, all working but sometimes at cross-purposes and repetitive efforts.

What are you looking to in the future, to bring all of these valiant efforts together to coordinate the efforts so we can be more efficient and effective in saving lives?

Sheriff URQUHART. I think what we have to stop doing is fighting. And we talked about it today, Congressman McDermott mentioned it, and Senator Kohl-Welles mentioned it. There is not enough money for all of us, not enough money for the Sheriff's Office, not enough money for Treehouse, not enough money for Mockingbird.

And what we have done in the past, we have fought over those funds. And guess who normally wins? The police. It is a much easier sell to the public. It is a much easier sell to the council and county executive to fund the police department.

And we have been real happy with that, but that is the wrong way to do it. We have to quit fighting over this limited number of funds and work together.

I much prefer to be in front of the county council, in front of Councilmember Dunn hand-in-hand with the social service providers and divvy up the money that way. They are just as important on any social problem, including this one, as the police are. And not just the Sheriff's Office but other police departments as well have to realize that if we are going to be successful.

To me, that is the next step, getting all of us on the same page and quit fighting over the money.

Chairman REICHERT. That is a small pot that we all fight over.

Councilman?

Mr. DUNN. I think John is right on there. I would just add to that the way that we are approaching the issue of human trafficking, generally, we are very much in sort of the beginning to mid-stages of understanding the issues and developing the best practices to deal with them.

You and I worked together more than a decade ago on gun violence. We put together a plan based on a lot of experiences. That plan worked over time.

We did the same thing with ecstasy and methamphetamine, getting those labs out.

So there is an evolution that is going take a period of years, as we understand from the victims' perspectives and what the nonprofits need, who are those trigger people or organizations that are going to tend to pull these people out of that horrible life.

So what I think we should be driving toward is nonprofit local, State, and Federal sets of best practices where we can all emphasize our areas of expertise. We need to find additional funding sources. Maybe we need to redirect existing resources. We can do a better job of raising money from the private sector, which I think we are starting to get better at as we do what the most important thing here is, is raising awareness, Congressman. That is one of the things that has been found to be lacking.

This issue is probably the least understood and least reported crime happening in our community today that somebody is prosecuted. People don't understand it. They are still in that mentality that there is a prostitute. That is a criminal now. That is a victim.

So those are the things we are working toward, and ultimately, a series of best practices promulgated with the help of Congress, perhaps through the Office of Justice Programs at the Federal level, may be the way to go.

Chairman REICHERT. Thank you. And I do think that it is an invisible sort of mindset that the people have.

Back in the Green River days, and my sheriff days, John, as you worked on the street—and I know some of the other law enforcement officers in the room—I often wondered and thought about people who were driving from home to work and drove by all these young girls and boys on the street but never saw them. And there were hundreds of them.

It just sort of was a shock to all of us that no one saw anything as you went back to the scene to try to gain information. There

were no witnesses. However, there were lots of people present. And that is a sad commentary.

I do think that you touched on something, both of you, and Ms. Rains has touched on this, too, in her testimony. I think when you think about 9,000 to 10,000 young people in foster care and prevention, one of the things that we have to take a look at is why are these 9,000 to 10,000 young people in foster care in the first place.

And there is really a beginning seed of where we need to start. And then those that are in foster care, of course, we really need to wrap our arms around them as a State.

And I know there are people here from DSHS. And I thank you so much for your work and thank you for being here today, too.

I know DSHS is involved with the Rescue and Restore effort, and I think that that is a national effort.

And, Councilmember Dunn, you referred to Project Safe Neighborhoods, which was an effort to end gun crime violence. But I think Rescue and Restore could be a similar effort in really eliminating human trafficking. It is something I think that we could grab onto at a national level. And I think it would take a State like Washington State, which is really active and forward-thinking, to take Rescue and Restore, make it a statewide program, a model for other states to model after.

I wanted to ask Mandy, I know you touched on this just a little bit. If I can call you Mandy, if that is okay?

Ms. URWILER. No problem.

Chairman REICHERT. So I really like how you characterized one of the drivers behind becoming a victim of trafficking, is that youth in foster care feel they have a lack of control. Where do you think, in some of the areas that we talked about control, how do you think that we can give youth control? What are some areas that you see, from your perspective?

Ms. URWILER. For me, I was lucky because I actually had a lot of control in my planning, because I had an attorney, because I was lucky to be in one of the very few counties that gives attorneys to foster youth.

But I think the control really comes in when I was able to sit with my social worker and my attorney when I was looking at foster homes to go to. And I actually got to interview the foster parents, and I was able to say I don't want to be in this placement because their values don't match up with mine and I don't think we would get along. I was able to have control on where I lived.

I was able to have control on when I got to go see my family, because I was able to talk with my social worker and my attorney and set up when the best visit times for me were. I didn't have school on Fridays, because I was going to a school that didn't have class on Fridays, so my visits were on Fridays. I could take the bus up from Shelton to Seattle to see my family.

But I didn't have control where I couldn't go on any school field trips. I wasn't allowed to go to a friend's house. And my friends, by the way, were a huge support to me.

For a short time, my ISSP, the service plan, said I was not allowed to sit in my room and be on the phone with my friends and family from back home all day, which my first 2 months spent in care, I didn't come out of a room and spent pretty much 24 hours

a day on the phone with my support network at home. I was told I couldn't do that, so I was cut off for several months from being able to contact people when I needed to. When I was getting ready for bed, I would call home and say, "Hey, I don't know what is going to happen and I am scared, and I want to go home, and I miss you." And then I wasn't allowed to do that. So that is a big control piece for me.

Chairman REICHERT. Thank you. Yes, so it is really the little things just about being a normal kid growing up in a home.

Ms. Gomez, I think that Mr. McDermott touched on a question that I want to go back to, and, again, going back to my experience in trying to take people off the street, to either get them to the YWCA or to a foster home or somewhere off the street.

How do people come to your organization? How do they come to you? Are you on the street? Do you have people on the street trying to pull people out of that life? Do you have referrals sent to you? Do police officers refer to you? How does that happen?

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes, we have a relationship with the Innocence Lost task force. They make referrals to us. Different organizations make referrals to us.

A lot of it is word of mouth. A lot of the women and girls that we have been working with have heard from other people about us.

We get referrals from everywhere. I think that everybody in social work is looking for somewhere to send their client who had been in the life or been involved. And really, there are not many resources.

So we are overwhelmed with people wanting to get in and get into the program.

Chairman REICHERT. And it is not just about getting out of the life, but you are also talking about drug addiction, alcohol addiction, and all of those things, too, that go along with it.

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes.

Chairman REICHERT. We know that sometimes that it is more than once off the street and into treatment, back again, and then back again. So it is a long-term effort to even save one life. It doesn't happen overnight.

So I know that is a huge struggle. Thank you so much for what you are doing.

And one of the things we want to do is help collect data, because I think that as we talked about some of the future efforts, we really need to make our efforts focused on where we know the money is going to do the most good. So the collection of information and data from all of you in this room who are involved I think it is really helpful in helping us identify where to really put our energy.

And just one last question for Ms. Rains. So when I mentioned why are kids in foster homes anyway, I think we have some of the answers to that, but how do we keep kids in their families? Is your organization involved in looking at that data at all, or working with other organizations that have looked at that data? Do you think that is important for us to examine a little bit closer?

Ms. RAINS. Absolutely. We are very excited about the implementation in the State of Washington about family assessment response, which diverts families and the youth from coming into foster care in the first place, provides intensive in-home family sup-

port. And it will be a program that will be rolling out over the next couple of years here in Washington.

But we believe that kids in need should stay with their families whenever possible, and so we are very excited about that, learning from several other States that have implemented differential response systems.

And when it is necessary for safety reasons to have youth placed in foster care, I think surrounding them with as many supporters as possible, giving them regular access to their families, trying to reunite, reunify, families whenever possible, is absolutely the best way to go. And Washington is a leader in that arena.

We are also working every day with about 40 percent of our youth in foster care in King County, for example, who are actually place with relatives. And working with those families to keep kids in their neighborhoods and family systems as much as possible I think leads to additional protective factors that can help keep youth off the streets and out of sex trafficking.

So all of those elements, I think, are important.

Chairman REICHERT. Yes, I agree. And thank you so much for your work in that area, and I look forward to the roll-out of the program. And if there is a role for us to play in that, maybe we can partner with you, along with everyone else at the table today, and in the room.

I was a foster grandparent for a while, until my two grandkids were adopted. And I have to hand it to my daughter and her husband. The visits with the biological mothers are a tough thing to do, especially after adoption. But that has continued on.

And both of these young women were drug and alcohol addicted, meth addicted, moms and on the street. So these two young kids, they have a stable home. But the visits with their biological moms still take place, so I think that is an important factor.

I want to thank all of you so much for attending the hearing today, and thank all of you for your testimony.

The important thing is that we do not want this effort to end here today for the Federal Government. So I want you all to know that.

I know one of my least favorite things to hear when I was the sheriff, or when I was working on a task force as the lead investigator, was from some Federal agency, "I am from the Federal Government, and I am here to help."

When I say that today, I really mean that. And I know that Jim does, too, from the bottom of his heart.

We want to be able to help in this effort. And I think we have something to offer besides legislation, hopefully. And so thank you again for all your work.

Just for the record, I would like to thank all of our witnesses and Jim McDermott for their testimony and attention to this important issue. I look forward to our continued work as a subcommittee as we work to prevent sex trafficking of children in our foster care system.

We received a lot of excellent testimony and recommendations today, which we will review closely as we plan our next steps.

If members have additional questions for witnesses, we will submit them to you in writing, and we would appreciate receiving your responses for the record within 2 weeks.

Chairman REICHERT. The committee stands adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 10:19 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]