

January 31, 2019

To: Montana Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Matthew Brower, Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference

Re: Testimony in support of SB 147

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Matt Brower [B R O W E R] and I currently serve as the Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference. I speak today on behalf of the Roman Catholic bishops of Montana.

I am here today to voice our support for Senate Bill 147.

Over the past few years, our legislature has heard a number of bills addressing the grave crime of human trafficking. By now you've all heard the statistics. But the victims of human trafficking are not statistics, they are real people exploited, abused and told the lie that people are no more than things to be used.

These crimes are being perpetrated all around us but often in the shadows. Trafficked persons, bound by fear, are often extremely reluctant to come forward and make any effort to escape their hellish captivity. Senate Bill 147 takes important steps aimed at protecting victims of human trafficking and puts would be offenders on notice that people are not things to be used but persons with inherent dignity and value.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, on behalf of the Montana Catholic Conference, I urge a "do pass" and thank you for your time.