

Faron Barr Testimony for SB497

As a representative of 44 Rotary clubs in NE Kansas representing approximately 2,100 Rotarians, I am speaking in favor of SB497. Our district decided to address the cause of eradicating human trafficking in early 2019 once we heard about how prevalent it is in our State. Rotary has seven areas of focus and this cause fits into the Peace and Conflict Resolution area of focus. Since then we have discovered many ways in which our members can be involved with bringing awareness to what human trafficking looks like in our State, helping with victim aid and reintegration, continued education for those who may be in a position to help with reporting, and advocacy for legislation that may help reduce the occurrence of human trafficking.

In 2019, our district partnered with a district in Mumbai, India to provide a grant that funded a Day Center for Human Trafficking Victims through the YWCA in Topeka, KS. My wife volunteers at this day center and sees several victims who come through this facility each week. Since the Day Center opened in November 2019, there have been 485 victims served. This is just in Topeka alone.

Our district 5710 has been involved in several grants that have brought in funds from a variety of sources to help communities in Topeka, Manhattan, and Kansas City. Through our worldwide network, we have partnered with clubs and districts from India, Taiwan, South Africa, and Panama to bring in approximately \$200,000 of grant funds to help with eradicating human trafficking. One area that has been identified as a very important aspect of preventing human trafficking is education of people who may see potential victims. We feel that requiring education of the professions mentioned in SB497 is a much needed law and will help reduce the occurrence of human trafficking.

In 2017, California enacted AB1227 which made human trafficking education mandatory for school personnel across the State. Since then, Rotary districts and clubs in California have used grant funds to help educate thousands of educators across the State. Our District 5710 and District 5680 (south and western Kansas) have partnered on several state-wide projects and I can see this being another area where we could find state-wide Rotarian support. Between the two districts, we represent approximately 4,000 Rotarians. We have already partnered with the Attorney General's office on helping with the mandatory human trafficking hotline posting law enacted last year. SB497 could be another area where we may be able to provide support again.

I hope you will support SB497. The education of professions that may see vulnerable youth on a routine basis is essential to preventing human trafficking. We have found many people in these professions who do not realize the prevalence of human trafficking in their respective areas of expertise. We think mandatory human trafficking education will help these individuals understand the problem more and learn what to do when they see the possibility of it happening.