



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE



Lutheran Office for Public Policy
in Wisconsin

February 5, 2008

To the Members of the Joint Committee on Finance:

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the Wisconsin Council of Churches, the Wisconsin Jewish Conference, and the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin stand together in support of SB 292 and AB 544, which would criminalize human trafficking in Wisconsin.

The growing incidence of human trafficking constitutes one of the gravest offenses against humanity. Human trafficking involves using fraud, force, and coercion to sexually exploit or otherwise press an unwilling person into the most degrading forms of labor. It preys upon the poorest men, women and children who are seeking the means to provide for their families a form of modern day bondage.

Globally, an estimated 800,000 people are victims of human trafficking, making it the third largest and fastest growing criminal industry in the world. Of those that are trafficked internationally, 80% are women and nearly half are minors. Here in the United States, an estimated 17,500 adults and children are trafficked every year. While the victims of trafficking are often hidden from view, domestic abuse shelters are witnessing an increased need for assistance. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Conference of Churches, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have all pledged to use their resources to raise awareness and end this affliction.

Passage of SB 292 and AB 544 would make the trafficking of adults and children a felony and would be a significant step in protecting the rights of men, women and children here in Wisconsin. We ask for your leadership to ensure passage of this important legislation and address the problem of human trafficking within our borders.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of John Huebscher in black ink.

John Huebscher
Wisconsin Catholic Conference

Handwritten signature of Michael Blumenfeld in black ink.

Michael Blumenfeld
Wisconsin Jewish Conference

Handwritten signature of Scott Anderson in black ink.

Scott Anderson
Wisconsin Council of Churches

Handwritten signature of Amy M. Johnson in black ink.

Amy M. Johnson
Lutheran Office for Public Policy

cc: Senator Grothman
Senator Coggs
Representative Jeskewitz
Representative Kessler