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**Testimony SB 1287: Human Trafficking Hotline Posting
March 27, 2007**

My name is Jennifer Carr and I am testifying on behalf of the Texas Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas. We support SB 1287 because it would:

1. Increase community awareness and understanding of this crime.
2. Inform and assist trafficking victims of the possibility of rescue by posting a 1888 nationwide hotline; and
3. Warn traffickers who transport victims thru Texas or use Texas as a port of entry or destination point, that they will be prosecuted.

The Catholic Church is in a unique position to assist in efforts to end human trafficking through our extensive global network of churches and service organizations. Catholic Charities offices throughout Texas assist in providing services to victims of Human Trafficking. Our experience has taught us that victims do not identify themselves to authorities because of the psychological torture used by their traffickers. For example, one of the victims that we served stated that traffickers will provide their victims with a rosary and tell them to pray for their dead mothers. If a victim states that his or her mother isn't dead, the trafficker threatens, "Well she will be if you try to escape." Next, the trafficker shows the victims a video of neighbors or loved ones being tortured or murdered to ensure compliance.

Identifying victims requires community awareness and visibility of rescue hotline numbers in order to facilitate rescues. Most rescues come from community tips – posted signs will help raise awareness in the community. The majority of rescues that have taken place have occurred in establishments that serve alcohol. We support all efforts to educate and inform Texans about the horrific crime of human trafficking and resources available to assist victims.

Thank you for your support of SB 1287.