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Prevent Using Tax Dollars for Abortion Referrals

Dear Senator:

Senate Bill 2107 is the main bill to address human trafficking in North Dakota. The Senate previously amended the bill on the Sixth Order to prevent tax dollars from being used to fund abortion referrals. **Please oppose any effort to remove that provision before final passage.**

The Threat is Real

In 2000, a bipartisan Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. Among other things, it provided federal funding to help victims of human trafficking. For ten years, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) received the grant to administer the program, through which it subcontracted with various individuals and organizations, Catholic and non-Catholic, around the country.

In 2011 the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) re-opened the application process. As in the past, the USCCB scored significantly higher than all other applicants. Nevertheless, DHHS awarded the grants to three lower scoring applicants. A subsequent Congressional hearing revealed that USCCB was denied the grant *solely* because it would not refer for abortions, despite the fact that nothing prevented USCCB's sub-grantees from referring and even performing abortions with other sources of funding.

DHHS's actions demonstrate that there are those who want to use services for human trafficking victims as a way to use tax dollars to counsel in favor of and for referring for abortions. Planned Parenthood wants to do the same thing here.

North Dakota Taxpayers Have Never Paid for Abortion Referrals

Except when forced to by federal courts, North Dakota taxpayers have **never** funded abortion referrals. Senate Bill 2107 continues that policy. It does **not** prohibit grantees from using their own funds to refer for abortions. It only prohibits using *state* funds for those activities. Nevertheless, Planned Parenthood is lobbying to remove that provision from SB 2107 so that state tax dollars could, for the first time ever, be used to refer for and counsel in favor of abortion.

The Provision is Needed

Although some people initially thought that current law already addressed this issue, subsequent reviews of the Century Code revealed that it does

not contain a general prohibition on using tax dollars for referring for abortions. The statutes only restrict specific programs (e.g., family planning services, alternatives to abortion services, public schools.) Those existing restrictions would not apply to services to help victims of human trafficking. This is why the provision was added to SB 2107.

The Provision is Workable

The state already places limitations on the use of tax dollars. For example, faith-based entities can receive funds to provide needed services like health care and adoption, but they cannot use that money for worship services. The Department of Human Services' Alternatives to Abortion program already prevents the use of state dollars to counsel in favor of or refer for abortions.

North Dakota must help the victims of human trafficking. We strongly support SB 2107. However, these efforts should not be used to start funding abortion referrals on the taxpayer's dime.

Please oppose any attempt to remove the provision from SB 2107 that prohibits the use of tax dollars for abortion referrals.