

MASSACHUSETTS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
WEST END PLACE

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BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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Bishop of Worcester

October 11, 2011

The Honorable Therese Murray
President of the Senate
State House Room 332
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Robert A. DeLeo
Speaker of the House of Representatives
State House Room, 356
Boston, MA 02113

The Honorable Mark C. Montigny
Chair, Senate Committee on Post Audit & Oversight
State House Room 312A
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Eugene L. O'Flaherty
Chair, Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House Room, 136
Boston, MA 02113

BY HAND

Dear Madam President, Mr. Speaker, Chairman Montigny and Chairman O'Flaherty:

We write as the four Roman Catholic Bishops of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts representing the Archdiocese of Boston and the Dioceses of Fall River, Springfield and Worcester. We extend our sincere gratitude to the House and the Senate legislative bodies for unanimously passing separate versions of legislation intended to end the tragedy of human trafficking in the Commonwealth. We urge the members of the Conference Committee to resolve the differences between the two versions of the bills as quickly as possible for the sake of all residents of the Commonwealth; especially the men, women and children who are victimized.

As you know, traffickers seek out and exploit the most vulnerable members of society; undocumented residents, runaway teenagers, homeless individuals, and people with alcohol and drug dependency. Traffickers often confiscate documents, threaten to deport individuals, and make threats against family members to exploit immigrants. Children without a parent or legal guardian are especially susceptible to commercial sexual exploitation. The promise of love, security and belonging can be deceptively appealing to a child who lacks a stable home environment or has left a family experiencing violence. Homelessness and chemical dependency continue to be a burdensome cross for too many individuals and families. Our state needs leaders to be particularly attentive to these "at risk" populations in order to prevent future victimization.

We congratulate the members of the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives for all their hard work in moving the human trafficking legislation and its important protections to the point of becoming new law. Again, we respectfully request that the Conference Committee work diligently to resolve the differences in the two versions of the legislation and end the tragedy of human trafficking.

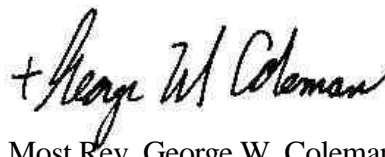
Enclosed please find a brochure titled "Sex Trafficking: The New Slavery" produced in 2010 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The information may be of some assistance to you in your final deliberations.

Thank you for your great work and dedication to advancing such an important issue. If you have any questions, please contact the staff at the Massachusetts Catholic Conference at 617-367-6060.

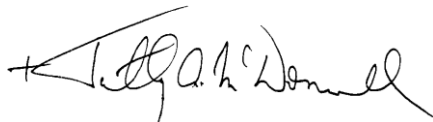
Sincerely,




Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Boston



Most Rev. George W. Coleman
Bishop of the Diocese of Fall River



Most Rev. Timothy A. McDonnell
Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield



Most Rev. Robert J. McManus
Bishop of the Diocese of Worcester

Enclosure

Cc: The Honorable Deval Patrick, Governor
The Honorable Tim Murray, Lieutenant Governor