

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

House Criminal Justice Committee

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Proponent Testimony

Senate Bill 4

Good afternoon, Committee Chair Manning, Vice Chair Rezabek, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee.

YWCA Dayton is submitting testimony today to register support for Senate Bill 4, sponsored by Senators Scott Oelslager and Stephanie Kunze. If enacted, this piece of legislation would serve to eliminate issues in current expungement law and break down the barriers to obtaining stable housing and employment that victims of human trafficking face due to their criminal record. Without access to safe shelter and opportunities to obtain basic needs, these victims are more vulnerable to further abuse.

As the only domestic violence shelter in all of Montgomery and Preble counties, YWCA Dayton is driven by a mission to eliminate racism and empower women, and prioritizes supporting those women who are survivors of gender-based violence. YWCA Dayton provides 24/7/365 shelter and supportive services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and other forms of intimate-partner and gender-based violence.

In 2012, the Ohio Legislature passed the Safe Harbor Act, which created a new



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expungement process to reverse the damage created by arresting victims of sex trafficking. The law allows survivors to erase conviction records resulting from a trafficking situation.

This law falls short of fully supporting survivors of human trafficking in multiple ways. First, survivors should be able to apply to expunge any criminal convictions where the person's participation was a result of being a victim of human trafficking. Second, survivors need to be able to expunge records of arrest that did not lead to conviction. Non-convictions appear on background checks, which are visible to potential landlords and employers, burdening women who are trying to rebuild their lives by obtaining safe, stable housing and gainful employment. SB 4 would serve to correct these oversights.

In alignment with our mission, YWCA Dayton thus requests that the Criminal Justice Committee support the passage of SB 4 in solidarity with our service population and survivors of gender-based violence throughout the state of Ohio.



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If the committee has any questions or desires further information, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (937) 461-5550 x109 or by email at swolfknight@ywcadayton.org.

Respectfully,

Sarah Wolf-Knight
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YWCA Dayton



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