



**HB 461 Testimony
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Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of House Bill 461. My name is Carly Mesnick. I am the manager for the Mount Carmel Health System Crime and Trauma Assistance Program (CTAP). Mount Carmel CTAP began providing expert services in 1997 – and remains one of the only of its kind of programs in the United States, offering trauma focused and specific counseling services, education and outreach to the communities and providers, and therapeutic advocacy at no cost to victims, survivors, and co-survivors of crime and traumatic events. CTAP funding consists of state and federal grants, donors, and the Mount Carmel Foundation.

Without CTAP as an option, poor, underserved, and affected victims from Franklin County and surrounding counties may not be able to access appropriate intensive trauma therapeutic services. CTAP addresses barriers many victims encounter such as financial, transportation and language, in seeking services. Services are offered at no cost, transportation assistance is available if needed, and interpreting services are provided.

Mount Carmel CTAP clinicians are highly skilled and trained in the most cutting edge, evidence based clinical interventions to treat trauma and related disorders, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. CTAP has dedicated clinicians who work with human trafficking victims, survivors, and co-survivors. Our program collaborates with and serves alongside with the leading organizations and agencies which serve human trafficking victims and survivors. CTAP maintains a client satisfaction survey average score of 95% overall, and 98% of survey respondents would recommend CTAP services to others. Each client has on average 69% decrease in PTSD symptoms.

It is recommended that the courts utilize a trauma informed care approach when working with people who have experienced traumatic experiences. Trauma informed care is a person-centered response that focuses on improving functioning and shift our understanding of someone's behavior as a result of "what has happened to them" as opposed to "what is wrong with them." It recognizes that people are more than their labels and diagnosis. The primary goal is Empowerment and Resiliency, marked by growth, recovery, and support. Interventions are collaborative-victim/survivor and court providers have equal and valuable knowledge, victim/survivor can be an active planner and participant in the legal process.

Currently, human trafficking laws mandate that prosecutors of human traffickers who exploit 16 and 17 year olds must prove compulsion, often relying on the victim's testimony, which exposes the client to re-victimization and does not serve as a trauma informed approach. HB 461 creates a more trauma informed approach by providing a GAL in a timely manner. The GAL's role is important in making sure the court understands the child's needs, one of those needs being trauma counseling and other supports necessary in the healing and recovery of complex trauma. Modifying the abeyance procedure allows for a more trauma-informed, therapeutic approach.

For the reasons presented in this testimony, I ask for your favorable consideration of this bill. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jason Koma, Regional Director of Gov. Affairs at Mount Carmel, at jkoma@mchs.com and we can provide you additional information or coordinate a tour of CTAP's services at Mount Carmel.