

Central Ohio Rescue & Restore Coalition: Legislative Advocacy Committee

Senate Bill 4: Expand Expungement and Intervention

House Criminal Justice Committee
Chairman Manning
Tuesday, May 22, 2018, 1:00 pm
Ohio State House, Room 114



Good afternoon Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Rezabek, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and members of the Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee:

Thank you for taking the time today to consider this important bill that will change the lives of many inspiring individuals whom we serve. The Central Ohio Rescue and Restore Coalition is a central Ohio network of organizations fighting human trafficking in different roles and different sectors. Our mission is to provide a collaborative, comprehensive community response to human trafficking in central Ohio through education, services, advocacy, and prosecution. (You can find out more about our work at www.centralohiorescueandrestore.org.)

The human trafficking survivors we serve are often forced to commit a number of different crimes by their traffickers, including prostitution, drug trafficking, theft, and more. Sometime, trafficking victims are forced to take the blame for crimes committed by their trafficker, in order to avoid being violently punished by their trafficker. After survivors have escaped their traffickers and start their lives over, records of these crimes keep them from enrolling in college, getting jobs, and renting apartments.

Under current Ohio law, sex trafficking survivors can expunge criminal records regarding prostitution related charges but struggle with jurisdictions which misinterpret the statute to forbid expungement of records related to other crimes. Senate Bill 4 will help fix this. This bill will help many human trafficking survivors get their lives back and reintegrate into society.

On May 17, 2017, Senate Bill 4 unanimously passed the Senate Judiciary Committee. Senate Bill 4 was then referred to this committee. The Central Ohio Rescue and Restore Coalition endorses the version of this bill that passed the Senate unanimously. This version of the bill will best allow survivors to rebuild their lives and successfully reintegrate into society.

Thank you for your support of this critical piece of legislation and thank you for your continued dedication to survivors of human trafficking.

In Solidarity,

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