

**Proponent Testimony Submitted to the House Criminal Justice Committee**  
**Senate Bill 13 (Sponsor: Senator Fedor)**  
**Submitted by: Child Sex Trafficking Survivor Haleigh Young**

Hello Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. My name is Haleigh Young. I would like to start by thanking all of you for the opportunity to share my testimony on behalf of Senate Bill 13. I am a survivor of child sex trafficking and I hope that my experiences will remain in your hearts as you give further consideration to this bill.

I would like to begin by reading a letter I wrote:

To the woman who trafficked me six years ago,

I doubt you would remember me, even if I was standing right in front of you. It is for people like you to forget the faces of the people you hurt, the lives you play a part in destroying. Maybe it is because to you I was never a person, only a product. Something for you to sell and make money from.

You trafficked me when I was seventeen. My name is Haleigh, but you called me Candy. You knew I was a child when you made the decision to sell me. You made a copy of my driver's license the first day we met. I remember because it is something I feared. The fact that you knew where I lived, my full name, and my birthday. I was scared you would find me if I left and even more scared you would find me after I told.

Back then, I did not understand the severity of what you and your two male bosses did to me. I did not understand what sex trafficking was, but you did.

You preyed on me because I was young and vulnerable, because I fulfilled the sick fantasies of the men you sold me to. You preyed on me because you knew I was already broken by previous predators, that I had left home and that I desperately craved love, care, acceptance, stability, a home, and a family.

You preyed on me because you knew you could get away with it. In my opinion, that just makes you that much more of a coward and that much weaker. I will give you credit though because you were smart. You started covering your tracks from the moment you decided to exploit me.

I was a child and I want you to know that you hurt me. You treated me as if my only worth was my body, as if I was an object. You lied to me and manipulated me, making me believe I could trust you, that you would take care of me and love me. Then, you sold me to men you knew would abuse me, force me to undress and participate in sexual acts that I did not want to participate in. You put a dollar amount on my value as a human being and a low one at that.

Recently, I found out that even though I disclosed, even though you trafficked a child, you received no legal consequences. Nor did your two male bosses, or the men you sold me to. The men who bought and sexually abused a child. You got away with it because in our state, the laws allowed you to find a loophole.

I am writing this because although you may never take responsibility, I want you to know that I hold you accountable. You trafficked me. You abused me. You exploited me. You inflicted trauma on me and I have to live with the consequences of your actions.

I cannot control what you did to me or the fact that you will never have to face the pain you caused and the consequences you deserve. However, I can choose to be stronger. I forgive you. I choose to let you go from my heart, so that I can set myself free from that part of my life. It will always be a part of my story, but it will never define me as anything less than a survivor and an advocate.

I wish you healing.

Sincerely,  
Haleigh

I wrote this letter after I learned that my perpetrators received no consequences for trafficking me, exploiting me, and abusing me. This letter is the only way I have of letting them know how badly and deeply they hurt me and they will never even read it.

I was seventeen when I was trafficked by a massager parlor in Ohio. I was a child. I did not have the knowledge, the comprehension, the power, or the voice to stop what was happening to me. I did not have any choice or freedom. No matter a child's age, no child deserves to be hurt in such horrific ways and no adult deserves to get away with such heinous crimes.

Children who are trafficked are almost always children like I was. Children that have already experienced trauma and abuse. Children that have already been hurt, exploited, and silenced. Children who have been taught over and over by the words and actions of predators, that they deserve less and that they do not matter.

That is why this bill is so important. It tells people like me that our voices do matter, our stories matter, and we matter.

Again, thank you all for allowing me to share my testimony with you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you have.