



1DivineLine2Health

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May 27, 2020 House Bill 431 Testimonial

Dear Ohio House of Representatives Criminal Justice Committee:

May you all continue to be in good health to make the right decisions to create a safe and healthy Ohio. First, I am the daughter of the Most High God. Second, Esther Flores. Third, a Registered Nurse and modern-day abolitionist who is the founder of a nonprofit named 1DivineLine2Health. I advocate for them who suffer here and abroad against crimes of humanity, like the sexual exploitation of females, males, and transgender folks.

We do not need databases criminalizing human trafficking victims instead THEY NEED SAFE PLACES to help them. The homeless, unhealthy, and traumatized sex workers my team serves are human trafficking victims. Will this database help them or stigmatize them? They are already sexually exploited, and their mug shots are on corner stores bulletin boards. Historically, we see the johns go unnoticed and if caught there is \$75 fine. On the other hand, the homeless human trafficking victims are charged with soliciting, loitering, drug paraphernalia, petite theft, and jay walking. They cannot afford to show up to court or pay fines so warrants are issued. Many end up in the jail detoxing and back on the same streets. On the West Side we have an 80% recidivism in prostitution because there is no safe discharged plan from jails. There are no full-time Drop-In Centers on the epicenters of drug and human trafficking. Survivors can testify with their backgrounds not being expunged it is difficult to obtain a job that pays good and health benefits and a decent place to live. There not enough places for homeless mothers struggling with substance abuse disorder to seek services. Yearly large nonprofits received fathered in grants to serve human trafficking victims and do not have direct contact to the numbers of souls the grassroots movements serve in alleys, streets and abandominiums. They expect them to travel to their offices and ask their case managers for help when they are homeless and lack money. Harm reduction is another form of social justice whereby the folks who need help are met in their familiar surroundings by compassionate, skillful, nonjudgmental, trauma informed and responsive professionals. Lady Justice is blindfolded to represent objective truth and her scale is weighing in favor of the many rich and powerful men who continue to oppress women in the criminal justice system. We have Ohio judges on the bench who sentence the same women they had sexual contact with. Look at Sullivant Ave History. Luke Sullivant would be shocked to find out his last name is synonymous to the sex and drug trade district. Our current leadership believes in the revitalization of buildings instead human lives is the effective strategy to eliminate poverty and societal woes and keep pushing people to the West Side from the other three corners that have been gentrified.

The Covid 19 pandemic has magnified the sexual exploitation we have more men and women on the streets discharged from jails and prostituting themselves for basic needs. Our Street Outreach as of March 31st saw over 700 human trafficking victims in comparison to over 1500 at the end of 2019. Our work is seen as a liability and has been denied funding by Covid 19 grant committees. However, folks in the suburbs have donated supplies so we can continue to operate. Collaborative efforts with the Ohio Department Health continue to provide the Narcan and the Columbus Health Department the condoms



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to protect the victims and perpetrators of sexually transmitted infections. Unfortunately, the lack of self-worth and hopelessness temporarily disappears by taking a substance to take away the emotional pain. Overdose rates are close to 50% higher than last year. Mary Haven Stabilization Center refuses to take anyone without identification since ADAMH only fund Franklin County residents. Did they forget most homeless people have no address and lack insurance. People from other counties need to return to their hometown in many instances that do not have the mental health and recovery services. Folks suffering from substance abuse disorder need mutual support and human contact like human trafficking victims. They have no meetings grounds to seek help. They are displaced and lack love, and this is the midpoint of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Social isolation deprives human motivation to live a productive life. Most of have no cell phones and cannot participate in the zoom chat rooms. They are phobic of congregate settings and the overcrowded shelters are not an option for them especially if they were discharged from the jails.

There many barriers for access to recovery treatment and simple basic needs. Domestic abuse on the rise and a hotline was created for the silent and phoneless victim to call for help. Stressed and unemployed parents who have children with behavioral issues are unable to patiently divert their behaviors end up beating their kids. More than ever the ones who will be negatively impacted are the people with limited resources and sometimes for women is allowing themselves to be sexually exploited to feed their families.

WE need funds for full-time Drop-In Centers to provide the basic needs for all those involved in prostitution and struggle with drug addiction in epicenters of human and drug trafficking. A Drop-In Center is a Harm Reduction Strategy where victims receive services from nonjudgmental professionals and peer supporters in a holistic and trauma responsive approach. Are you aware there is no full-time Drop-In Center in Franklin County? The courts need to be the defenders of human trafficking victims. Many have dual diagnoses of mental and substance abuse disorder. The courts, police departments and others see them as prostitutes. I see them as someone's child and a destitute person who lacks love from officials.

Ohio continues to be on the top five for Human Trafficking, opiate overdose deaths and criminal activities. As a result, of the ineffective strategies of local leaders who purposely ignored and criminalized the human beings my team care for in the past four years on the streets, alleys and abandominiums on the west side and other areas. In 2019 at a four-hour Drop-In Center on Sullivant Ave we served human trafficking victims: 1511 women, 57 children and 34 trans women. At the Drop-In Center we provided them with a warm meal, clothes, hygiene kits, First Aid, Narcan and condoms. I personally cleaned their MRSA+ infected wounds and at their request transported them into recovery and hospitals. We need funds for operational cost and a database to transfer their history with their consent into recovery places out of Columbus since there is not enough places for treatment especially single mothers with multiple children.



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There needs to be harsher penalties on the Johns and more John Schools. They need to understand the health risks and mental disorder that contribute to their fetishes. If there were more Drop-In Centers the human trafficking victims would be less visible and the demand decreases. The first amendment does not endorse pornography, prostitution, and brothels. The World Wide Web is the free data base for perpetrators and victims to fuel the human trafficking pandemic.

So, I ask does any act that capitalizes by violating the mental, physical, spiritual, and environmental health factors of human life is acceptable in the US constitution? NO! Human Trafficking is a HEALTH HAZARD & A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY. The wording on HB 431 does not protect the traumatized sex workers it criminalizes them. The current system perpetuates their unhealthy behaviors through the recycling ineffective strategies like incarceration is rehabilitation for mental health and substance abuse disorder. I oppose House Bill 431, the sexual exploitation data base for personal and clinical experiences with vulnerable populations who are sexually exploited. The criminal justice system and police department need to acknowledge INCARCERATION IS NOT REHABILITATION for homeless, beaten, tortured, and raped human trafficking victims especially if they were groomed in dog cages.

As a legislative body choose to look at another option to provide safe places and a data base to case manage victims of sexual exploitation and provide them with the basic needs and to live a healthy and productive life. Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican president had many conversations with Sojourner Truth. They both shared similar principles and not once she was judged by her skin color and vagina. Sojourner became a part of his council in abolishing slave trade. She was a force to be reckon with, a human activist, and abolitionist who loved God and those who were suffering. President Lincoln was the first president to abolish slavery yet the 13th amendment is being challenged when the johns and pimps rarely get caught and the least ones on the database. President Lincoln said "This world of compensations; and he who would be no slave, must consent to have no slaves. Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves, and under a just God, cannot long to retain it."

I consent with you today to protect traumatized sex slaves and workers from landing in this database and fund efforts of a database to help them in a loving community like 1DivineLine2Health Drop-In Center so they can have the right to a healthy life with liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Thank You.

Respectfully,

Esther Flores BSN, RN