



**HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND  
SOCIAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE**

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

Date: May 31, 2019

RE: Am. Sub. H.B. 166  
As Passed by the House

The University of Toledo's Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute is writing in support of an increase to the Victims of Human Trafficking Fund to be used to provide treatment, care, rehabilitation, education, housing, and assistance for victims of trafficking in persons as specified in section 5101.87 of the Ohio Revised Code.

As a researcher and advocate specializing in anti-trafficking work, I have spent 25 years working with victims, researching the issue, and advocating in the anti-trafficking field. I have published over 20 articles on human trafficking in Ohio, been federally funded for 10 consecutive years to conduct studies, and have developed research-informed intervention and prevention programming to support victims.

Victims need support to become survivors. Without adequate support victims spiral into consistent and lifelong depression, with the most common mental health diagnosis being post-traumatic stress disorder. Over 40% have suffered a significant head or neck injury from the violence suffered, indicating possible Traumatic Brain Injuries. Many are not able to immediately seek employment and go to work after such a trauma at the hands of their traffickers. They have to first learn to be free emotionally and physically from debilitating violence and consistent control.

Having done extensive research across Ohio, we know that our victims need comprehensive and intensive services ranging from evidence-based trauma treatment counseling, family work, basic needs, educational support, housing, legal services, health services, and more.

Increased funding is needed to care for victims of both sex and labor trafficking. Both the University of Toledo (2010) and the University of Cincinnati (2019) estimate there are between 1,032-1,078 youth victims of sex trafficking in Ohio with another 4,000-5,000+ who are at risk. These estimates are very conservative. In Lucas County alone, 894 youth reported on the Lucas County Health Assessment that they exchanged sex for something of value such as food, drugs, shelter or money, which under Ohio law identifies them as trafficking victims. Approximately 500 of these youth were under the age of 16 at the time they reported this crime. Imagine the real number of victims, given that one county in Ohio reports 500 youth, leaving 87 counties uncounted.

We are aware that the majority party in the General Assembly has stated that ending human trafficking is a legislative priority. We commend you on your awareness that victims in Ohio need our recognition and attention. Your support to increase the funding needed to support human trafficking victims in Ohio will significantly contribute to the effort to prioritize anti-trafficking work in the state.

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