

Dear Ohio Criminal Justice Committee Members,

My name is Jeff Wilbarger and I urge you to do all within your power to ensure that HB 461 is signed into law.

I am the Founder and Executive Director of The Daughter Project in northwest Ohio and since 2012, we have helped about 50 adolescent girls and women begin their life-long journey of recovery from sex trafficking. We were recognized for our work in the summer of 2016 when we were awarded the Jacqueline Kennedy Award for Exemplary Community Service in Washington D.C.

Without a doubt, HB 461 provides much needed support for the many adolescent girls who are NOT prostitutes but who have been coerced, manipulated and forced into sex trafficking. Without exception, the fifteen adolescent girls, aged 12 to 17, who we helped directly, as well as many others who we have met, were all sexually abused PRIOR to being sex trafficked/forced into prostitution by pimps or strip club owners. I appeal to each of you to rationally consider what healthy young girl would choose to be raped for the profit of others. The research is clear, children cannot choose to be a prostitute and our laws should reflect this truth. All children under the age of 18 should be rescued and provided with recovery services without delay and without any burden of proof on their part.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about my wholehearted support for HB 461. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of my e-mail.

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Serving God by serving others,
Jeff Wilbarger
Director, The Daughter Project
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