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**Committees:**  
Finance, Vice Chair  
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Subcommittee  
Education  
Local Government, Public Safety,  
and Veterans Affairs  
Rules & Reference  
Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce

**Gayle L. Manning**  
Majority Whip  
13th District

Chairman Bacon, Vice-Chair Dolan, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 244. As Senator Dolan noted, this bill will increase the penalties for those convicted of promoting prostitution, especially for those with multiple convictions.

As of January 2018, Ohio is 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the severity of its human trafficking issue. The Ohio Attorney General's 2017 Annual Report on Human Trafficking notes that, "In 2017, there were 208 potential victims of human trafficking identified," and that, "During the past year, law enforcement identified 221 suspected traffickers...". While it is difficult to know the numbers of unreported or unidentified cases and the numbers are likely higher, even one case of human trafficking is one too many.

Earlier in this General Assembly the Senate, with a bipartisan vote, passed Senate Bill 1, which sought to counter the opiate epidemic by increasing penalties for those who engaged in the trafficking of drugs containing fentanyl. The thought is that by going after those who facilitate the crime we can work to end the epidemic.

Human trafficking is quite similar to the opioid epidemic in that it can destroy the lives of Ohioans who get trapped in a cycle that they feel they cannot emerge from. To facilitate the subjection of someone to involuntary servitude or sexual servitude is simply unconscionable and goes against every notion of justice and civil rights that we hold dear as Ohioans.

To further illustrate the need for increased penalties, one need look no farther than several of Ohio's neighboring states. In Michigan, the crime of human trafficking is punishable by up to 10 years in prison, a \$10,000 fine, or both. If the victim is a minor, then the penalty is boosted to a maximum of 20 years, \$20,000 fine, or both.

In Pennsylvania, it is a second degree felony to facilitate human trafficking, a first degree felony for trafficking a minor, and a first degree felony for knowingly subjecting someone to involuntary servitude or sexual servitude.

Lastly, in West Virginia, the penalty for human trafficking – if the victim is an adult – is a felony punishable by 3-15 years in prison, a \$200,000 fine, or both. If the victim is a minor, then the penalty becomes a felony punishable by 10-20 years in prison, a \$300,000 fine, or both.

It is our goal that by increasing Ohio's penalties for human trafficking to be more on par with other states, then we can work to end this heinous act not only in Ohio, but to do our part to end it both nationally and globally.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify today and I am happy to answer any questions at this time.