



# MIKE DEWINE

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The Honorable Kevin Bacon  
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee  
1 Capitol Square, Rm. 035  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Bacon,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter in support of Senate Bill 244, legislation sponsored by Senator Dolan and Senator Manning to strengthen penalties against those involved in the promotion of human trafficking – especially those who use drugs and drug addiction as coercion.

As the Ohio Attorney General, I have worked closely with my office's Human Trafficking Commission to increase protections for survivors of human trafficking and create stiffer penalties to hold traffickers accountable for their heinous actions.

The Commission meets on a regular basis to discuss current trends across the state, collaborate on projects and ideas, and create forward-thinking, meaningful legislation. Commission members also help train law enforcement across the state to better identify potential victims of human trafficking and assist in accessing services for those individuals once they are identified. The collaboration in the state of Ohio between local service providers, law enforcement, and the state is unique and allows us to do the most good for those victimized by traffickers in our state.

At the same time, my office is also joining agencies and advocates from all over Ohio to fight the opioid epidemic, where we are losing nearly 15 Ohioans every day. We have seen too many families torn apart, too many children left parentless, and too many parents burying their children because of drugs. We can do better and we must do better.

This bill would allow us to provide even greater protections for victims of human trafficking by allowing us to hold the traffickers accountable for using drugs and drug addiction to control their victims. Traffickers use the threat of withholding drugs to force vulnerable people suffering from addiction to engage in sex and labor trafficking. We must send the traffickers a message: that we will not stand by and watch as they enslave our families, friends, and neighbors through addiction and trafficking.

I strongly encourage the passage of this legislation, and appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Very respectfully yours,

Mike DeWine  
Ohio Attorney General