



## Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association

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Senate Bill 5  
Proponent Testimony  
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Chairman Lang, Vice-Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on Senate Bill 5, a bill to increase the penalties for promoting prostitution, something that is critical in the fight against human trafficking.

Under current law the offense of promoting prostitution is generally a fourth degree felony. This penalty is enhanced to a felony of the third degree if the prostitute is a minor. An offender is subject to a mandatory prison term only when there is also a specification in the indictment that the offense was committed in furtherance of human trafficking. The penalty is always a fourth degree felony regardless of the number of times an individual is convicted of promoting prostitution. This provides little deterrent to repeat violators, does not provide what we feel is appropriate punishment for repeat violations, and does not appropriately protect victims or the public from those who continue to sexually exploit others for their own profit.

Senate Bill 5 provides for an increased penalty for individuals with previous convictions for promoting prostitution. Importantly, the bill also provides for an increased penalty for individuals who are convicted of trafficking in drugs along with promoting prostitution. Drug abuse leaves individuals more vulnerable to prostitution by creating a means to fuel their addiction. It makes them easier targets for offenders.

Like the bill sponsors, we believe that human trafficking can be curtailed by imposing stiffer penalties on individuals for promoting prostitution, two offenses that are closely linked. By providing for graduated penalties, Senate Bill 5 will help deter these crimes, ensure that individuals who continue to victimize the vulnerable spend more time in prison, and give victims a chance to rebuild their lives. This promotes safety for victims and our communities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.