

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

BILL NO: Senate Bill 13

TITLE: Apply same human trafficking offenses to all victims under 18

COMMITTEE: Senate Judiciary

DATE: March 18th, 2019

POSITION: Support

Dear Chairperson Eklund, Vice Chairperson Manning, and Committee Members:

At She Has A Name, we are a community of abolitionists that exists to fight human trafficking through education, collaboration, and survivor care. Our vision is to see all those impacted by human trafficking restored into society, welcomed in the workplace, and thriving in community. As a recognized training presence here in Columbus, we frequently train parents and care practitioners to recognize signs of human trafficking and to care for those impacted appropriately. We proudly collaborate with more than two dozen organizations, groups, and businesses dedicated to fighting human trafficking locally here in Columbus. Like many of our partner organizations who join us in serving domestic minors impacted by human trafficking, we have found that states are most successful in addressing this crime when all commercially sexually exploited minors can be identified as victims of sex trafficking.

The state of Ohio remains fourth in the nation for human trafficking cases according to the number of tips that are reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline managed by The Polaris Project. But we have hope that this is because of the great number of Ohio residents who are aware of the existence of human trafficking in their neighborhoods and report tips to the proper authorities through the hotline. It is because of this awareness that Ohio is at the forefront of responding to the issue of human trafficking through a holistic, collaborative approach.

Unfortunately, we are the only state which still requires the use of force, fraud, coercion, or compulsion to prove cases of child sex trafficking. Once adopted, SB 13 will be another helpful tool practitioners can utilize to connect those impacted by human trafficking with vital rehabilitative services that remove victims from vicious cycles of exploitation.

We look forward to a day when our only anti-human trafficking efforts will be educating those at risk, such as the domestic minors who are currently a major target. Equipped with the knowledge of what healthy relationships should look like and how to recognize signs of exploitation, once-vulnerable children will be able to avoid ever being exploited in the first place.

Thank you to Senator Fedor and the Ohio Senate for continuing to raise awareness about human trafficking and for considering legislation such as this one which will protect the vulnerable and at-risk in our communities.

Respectfully,

Courtney Schmackers
Executive Director

