



**JEAN SCHMIDT  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

House Bill 276

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and Members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on HB 276 to prohibit receiving proceeds of prostitution.

Ohio ranks 5th in the nation for human trafficking. Human trafficking is a violent crime that forces a vulnerable population into dangerous and illegal acts against their will, the most common act being prostitution. In 2020, Ohio had over 200 investigations related to human trafficking and identified nearly 150 potential victims. Studies show that there is an estimate of 1,032 known minor and young adult victims and 4,209 at-risk individuals. Countless more victims exist that go unnoticed.

There is often difficulty in arresting someone who is most likely a human trafficker – the pimp. When law enforcement arrests a prostitute, the pimp is not physically present. Under current law, it is difficult to indict those who are not directly involved in the act. This bill will make it easier for law enforcement to tie traffickers and pimps to the illegal act, no matter how far they are from the crime. This bill will create a new, third degree felony offence that makes it illegal for pimps and human traffickers from receiving money earned by prostitution. If the victim is a minor, it will be a second degree felony.

Human trafficking is an insidious crime that pulls people into a situation against their will. Prostitutes often believe they cannot leave their situation. They believe they are the only ones violating the law. Without being able to arrest the pimp or human trafficker, they are right. This law will change that.

Thank you for your time. Representative Powell and I are happy to take any questions you may have.