



Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association

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House Bill 427
Written Proponent Testimony
May 17, 2022

Chairman Manning, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer written proponent testimony on House Bill 427.

Our Association supports House Bill 427 to provide that the element “compelled” in our trafficking in persons and compelling prostitution statutes is established if the state proves that the defendant overcame the victim’s will by furnishing a controlled substance or manipulation of a controlled substance addiction. Substance use is a significant risk factor for human trafficking victimization. According to the Polaris Project, an organization dedicated to the fight against sex and labor trafficking, in 2019, the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline reported that substance use concern was the top risk factor for sex trafficking victimization and that inducing or exploiting substance abuse issues was the primary form of force, fraud, and coercion employed by traffickers to exploit victims.¹

Prosecutors can and do consider the role that substance addiction plays in the exploitation of victims through force, fear, duress, intimidation, and fraud. We know that traffickers use drugs to encourage addiction as a means of gaining and retaining control of a victim and that they withhold drugs to coerce them to engage in sexual activity. House Bill 427, however, makes it clear that evidence of this type of activity is, by itself, enough to prove that the offender compelled the victim’s behavior. The bill makes it more likely that prosecutors will be able to secure justice for the victims of this horrendous violent crime.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of this bill. We encourage the Committee’s favorable consideration.

¹ <https://polarisproject.org/2019-us-national-human-trafficking-hotline-statistics/>