

Opponent Testimony on House Bill 172

House Health Committee

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I am writing on behalf of strong opposition to HB 172. While I do not write in my capacity as an OSUMC employee, I write as a 20 year advocate for survivors of Human Trafficking. I have served as a probation officer at CATCH court (Franklin County Municipal Court) and as co-founder of Sanctuary Night, Ohio's largest drop in center for sexually exploited women. Throughout my years I cannot count for you the DOZENS of women I have encountered as adults who were sexually abused and/or sex trafficked as minors by their own family members or with their family member's knowledge. Requiring parental consent for counseling especially in cases where families are isolated because of criminal activity and cycles of abuse is counterintuitive.

I have witnessed a second point of view of adults who have been abused:

Many of peers have been sexually abused or raped as minors. They have done an incredible amount of work in therapy and recovery and are productive citizens in our society. They were believed and *fought for* by their parents. They had great mentors and counselors who walked beside them as they healed. Not all of us have this opportunity.

Thanksgiving is next week- it triggers me to remember three specific conversations I had with three different members of CATCH court. They wanted to go home for Thanksgiving and sit at a dinner table with their families so that their families could be proud of the progress they made. They were in substance use treatment, sober, and working on getting their GEDs or visitation with their children – they were showing up to life and succeeding. But they needed to talk about how to sit across the dinner table from stepdad, who had abused them as children and whom mom would never leave. These dear women have to relive their trauma as little girls just to earn the right to sit at their own Thanksgiving tables.

Most of us just worry about talking about politics with our Aunt So-and-so.

Thank you for your time.