



**INTERESTED PARTY TESTIMONY
HB 88, The Ohio House Judiciary Committee
Advocating Opportunity
November 12, 2025**


Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Synenberg and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide interested party testimony for House Bill 88 on behalf of Advocating Opportunity.

Advocating Opportunity (AO) is a nonprofit organization that provides holistic advocacy and free legal services to survivors of human trafficking. With offices in both Toledo and Columbus, AO represents survivors across Ohio, working in collaboration with courts, law enforcement, grassroots organizations, and social services providers. Our attorneys and advocates serve nearly 200 survivors of human trafficking a year. These survivors include people of all ages, genders, and nationalities who have experienced sex and labor trafficking.

AO was prepared to bring lengthier testimony to the hearing today. However, we have reviewed the proposed amendment to this bill that changed our approach. Our paramount concern was the creation of a new felony offense for “participating in an organization or operation for trafficking in persons.” This statute contained overly-broad language that would easily implicate victims of human trafficking in the ordinary pattern and practice of most human trafficking schemes. Traffickers often leverage power and control over their victims to compel the victim’s participation in their trafficking scheme – largely to help distance the trafficker from exposure and liability. Of specific concern was the inclusion of the acts “participate in”, “supervise”, and “assist.” Any law that puts victims at increased risk of criminalization and punishment for the crimes against them causes the anti-trafficking community significant pause. The amendment, though sweeping, does address the identified issue with H.B. 88.

Thank you to the Committee for taking the time to grapple with this difficult issue and for your consistent attention to the needs of survivors of human trafficking. We share the same goals: to hold those who harm victims accountable, but not at the expense and further vulnerability of the victims themselves. I appreciate your time, effort, and consideration.

Please note that at this time, AO cannot speak to any other proposed or amended provision of this bill and limits our testimony to the human trafficking portion.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Dunlap", written over a solid horizontal line.

Emily Dunlap, Managing Attorney
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