**The Collaborative to End Human Trafficking**
Proponent Testimony – Ohio Senate Bill 421
May 20, 2026

Chairman Manning, Vice Chairwoman Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony in support of Senate Bill 421, which would extend the civil statute of limitations from one year to five years for actions brought against an individual for conduct prohibited as a sex offense.

The Collaborative to End Human Trafficking is a Northeast Ohio-based nonprofit whose mission is to lead, empower, and connect the community to eradicate human trafficking. Since 2007, the Collaborative has worked to elevate awareness of trafficking as a pervasive but often overlooked crime and to build a coordinated, community-wide response. The organization serves as the backbone for Greater Cleveland's Coordinated Response to Human Trafficking, a multidisciplinary coalition of government agencies, nonprofits, businesses, and other community partners. In this role, the Collaborative provides leadership, training, and technical assistance to help frontline professionals identify trafficking, respond in a trauma-informed manner, and connect survivors to services.

An extended civil statute of limitations is vital for survivors of sex offenses, including many individuals who have experienced trafficking. SB 421 would increase the time survivors have to bring a civil action based on a sex offense from one year after the cause of action accrues to five years. This change better reflects the realities of trauma, coercion, fear of retaliation, and the complex recovery process that often delay disclosure and legal action.

Survivors frequently need years to achieve stability before they are able to participate in legal proceedings, particularly civil litigation that may require recounting abuse and confronting a perpetrator. A one-year filing window often expires before a survivor has secured safe housing, developed a support system, or fully understood that the harm they experienced may give rise to civil remedies. Extending the statute of limitations to five years acknowledges that healing and readiness take time and ensures survivors have a more meaningful opportunity to seek justice.

From the Collaborative's perspective, SB 421 strengthens the broader response system our training and coalition work is designed to support. Identification of trafficking must be paired with legal frameworks that preserve access to justice when survivors are ready to come forward. The bill aligns with Ohio's efforts to advance victim-centered, trauma-informed responses to trafficking and sexual violence by recognizing the long-term impacts of trauma and supporting pathways to healing and accountability.

Chairman Manning, Vice Chairwoman Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 421. On behalf of the Collaborative to End Human Trafficking and the many partners and survivors engaged in our coordinated response, we respectfully urge favorable consideration and passage of this legislation.

**Kirsti Mouncey, LISW-S**
President & CEO
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