



**CITIZENS FOR
COMMUNITY VALUES**

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To: Chairman P. Scott Lipps
Vice Chairman Don Manning
Ranking Member Janine R. Boyd
Members of the House Health Committee

From: Rachel Citak, Esq.
Legal Counsel
Citizens for Community Values

Re: Support of HR 180

My name is Rachel Citak. I am Legal Counsel for Citizens for Community Values, Ohio's Family Policy Council. And at CCV, a lot of what we do revolves around empowering and uplifting vulnerable or overlooked segments of society.

Before I graduated from the University of Cincinnati College of Law as a bearcat with a law degree, I was a Muskie first.

I graduated Cum Laude from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio with a Bachelor of Science, English minor, Psychology major. I was inducted into XU's chapter of the National Psi-Chi Honor Society.

I had plans to apply for grad school and specialize in psychology for rape survivors and those suffering from PTSD. Today, I do work as Legal Counsel by day, but by night I train as a volunteer with Gracehaven's nonprofit housing and rehabilitation for juvenile human trafficking victims.

So, I am not primarily here as an attorney today. I am here as an advocate for women and mental health, especially as it applies to Ohio's black communities.

According to the Harvard Law website "Violence Against Women on the Internet," it has been proposed that pornography presents a troubling intersection of race-based and gender-based violence. Here it's noted how stereotypes such as the passivity of Asian women, the "taming" of black women, the language barriers of Latino women—these have all been eroticized and commoditized by the pornography industry.

HR 180 serves to benefit Ohio by sending a message of support, rallying behind victims of the pornography industry. This includes addicts, human trafficking victims, revenge porn victims, exploited sex industry workers who feel too trapped to seek a career elsewhere, women who have been discarded from the industry once they grow older or no longer uphold the imposed physical standards of sexuality, and women in general, who have to exist and thrive in this culture that porn is creating.

These same threats for the spectatorship and commoditization of minority women exists in an even more detrimental manner within the pornography industry.



Patricia Hill Collins is a black professor, prior president of the American Sociological Foundation, and renowned social theorist. She often examines the connections between gender and racial oppression. In her essay, “Pornography and Black Women’s Bodies” she argues that pornography has not “grafted in” black women to a preexisting pornographic industry, but instead pornography was most likely born out of this foundation of slavery’s commoditization of black women’s bodies.

Slavery *was* pornographic. Rape, sexual violence, sexual mutilation, conquest, chains, money, survival, submission—every element, down to the voyeuristic auction block where men bid on naked bodies to do their bidding. HR 180 even points out how pornography has been used as advertisement for pimps to attract consumers to preview and pick out their “products.”

I have heard argument that the pornography and the sex industry as a whole is empowering, just as some have said in support of historically stereotypical roles of pimps, prostitutes, drug dealers, criminals, and poverty for black and Latino on-screen roles — “bad representation is better than no representation!”

In the April magazine for Teen Vogue, I was deeply troubled by an article entitled “Why Sex Work is Real Work.” This article was written by an educated, MD, reproductive rights activist. The ironic thing is, there was *another* article published by Teen Vogue in January of 2018, where Ashlee Marie Preston, a black transgender woman, opens up about the horrors of enduring 5-6 years of prostitution while homeless, trading virginity for \$40 and shame in a stranger’s car, even overcoming drug addiction and escaping survival sex work in order to become editor-in-chief of a publication and run for office.

Any narrative of the Sex Work Industry that leaves out such victims is devoid of reality.

The face of human trafficking lurks within the pornography and sex work industry. We just can’t tell because their next meal, their housing, their very life may depend on them being a good actor.

And *that* is a sex trafficking pornographer’s best kept secret.

So here we are with Ohio ranked among the top 4 states for reported human trafficking. As HR 180 points out, pornography is integral to the sex trafficking industry. More than half of sex trafficking victims have reported being “required to learn and perform sexual acts according to depictions in pornography.”

This is not *Taken*. This is not *Pretty Woman*. There is no Liam Neeson. There is no Richard Gere. We need to radically change the picture in our minds that we have of the typical sex trafficking victim. Young girls are drawn in to the glamour of an illusion, a life that will never be theirs, by the luxuries promised by pimps with a capacity for violence and romance.



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Many victims are not white, and most do not come from nor are ever sent overseas. They do come in all colors, but a disproportionate number actually have skin like mine. According to the 2018 Ohio Attorney General Human Trafficking Report, most traffickers/kidnappers are black males, and most sex slave customers, johns, or consumers are white males. And even though black people only make up 13% of the Ohio and world populations, 40% of human sex trafficking victims are black, even more so in metropolitan areas, even more so among black youth.

And that's just the ones that we know of.

If you are blessed to picture in your mind three black children between ages 12-19 that you know of, please know that these children are three times more likely to be victims of violent crimes like child abuse and neglect. As HR 180 states, abuse, neglect, and homelessness are all risk factors among victims of human trafficking—and factors for women and minors who enter the sex work industry as well.

There is no sufficient amount of transparency that could legitimize the negative impact of the pornography industry. There is no way to know whether the boy or girl or man or woman or trans-man or trans-woman on the screen is engaging in this sexual conduct and filmed consensually or not. There is no way to know whether he or she is being paid for a job, or exchanging pornographic participation for a meal and lodging.

So I ask that if you think pornography is unrelated to the plight of human trafficking and victims within minority populations, please think again, and vote yes for HR 180.

Citizens for Community Values (CCV) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that endeavors to create an Ohio where God's blessings of life, family, and religious freedom are treasured, respected, and protected.

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