

**PROPONENT TESTIMONY**  
**SB 183, The Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**Ashley Perez, Survivor**  
**October 4, 2021**

Chair Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for Senate Bill 183.

My name is Ashley Perez. I am a survivor of human trafficking. I have been out of that life for 5 years and today I am a stay-at-home mother of five and wife. My oldest child is 11 years old, my second child is 10, my third is almost 9, my fourth is almost 4, and I have a baby who is almost 2. I spend my days taking care of my children and our home. My oldest child has a few disabilities that require me to take him to doctor's appointments very often. I take him to physical therapy twice a week, med checks every three months, and allergy shots once a month. Our 3-year-old is in preschool so I take him back and forth for half-days. My job as a mother is pretty busy and I love spending time with my children now that I can do so, but it was not always this way.

When I was 12 years old, I began using drugs and running away from home. As I got older, my drug use got worse, and I was taken advantage of. I was forced to live with my drug dealer and sell my body to his friends and acquaintances. I did not get to keep any of that money, that money was for the dealer. He would give me more drugs to keep me going, to keep making him money, and that was my life for many years. I was stuck in a life of Hell, selling my body all day every day for someone else to benefit, so I would keep putting money in his pockets even though inside I was dying. I missed my kids so bad but I didn't know how to get out, until one day when I met my current husband. He took me out of that life, but this time it was different. This time I went to jail on one of my cases and I was put on probation and sent to an outpatient treatment program. I was able to be back in my children's life and my husband got us a house a little ways away to keep me away from that old life and those people. We worked hard to get my older kids back.

I was working my recovery program and doing everything probation required of me and eventually I got successfully released from probation and all programs. Today we have 2 children together and we have my 3 older children. I am able to be here with my kids and do all

the things a mother should be doing: football, soccer, parks, school work, etc and it is great! I love it but there is something missing. I want to be able to send all my kids to school, to send them to college, and go to work to be able to help support our family but with my record I will never be able to get a good enough job, if any job at all. I would like to one day work at my kids school district as bus driver or lunch lady, that way I can always be there when my kids are home and work while they are in school. My record is holding me back, it is really hard for me. I know I will not get hired with that record. If I can't get a good job I won't be able to support my kids and my family the way that I want to. It really limits our opportunities.

My whole record is because of what I went through. The only time I have ever gotten in trouble was when I was being used by that dealer. Most of my cases are drug-related, and all of them are because of my addition and how it was being used against me. I never got a soliciting case, which means right now I cannot get my record expunged. I never picked up a soliciting case because I was being sent out to work by telephone appointments, to motels and houses. It was all facilitated by them, they made deals on the phone, and they made sure I got there and back. I was never somewhere that the police could pick me up for soliciting, that's not how it worked for me.

Thank you for your time and for listening to my story and all of our stories. Thank you for your work on this, because by passing this law, you will change my life greatly. I want to be able to work and make things better for my children. Without this law change, these dreams will be impossible for me.

Ashley Perez\_\_\_\_\_

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