

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

BILL NO: Senate Bill 183

TITLE: Enact Expanding Human Trafficking Justice Act

COMMITTEE: Senate Judiciary

DATE: October 19th, 2021

POSITION: Support

Dear Chairperson Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking member Thomas and Senate Judiciary Committee Members:

At She Has A Name, we are a strong community that exists to fight human trafficking through education, advocacy, and care for those impacted. Our vision is to see all those impacted by human trafficking restored into society, welcomed in the workplace, and thriving in community. As an agency providing services to survivors of human trafficking we support this bill which will expand expungement opportunities for Ohio's victims of human trafficking.

During our 11 years as a local anti-human trafficking agency we have seen a variety of services developed in hopes of aiding survivors of both labor and sex trafficking on their journeys toward restoration. From this perspective I can share that the barriers created by the legal system continue to create hurdles to individuals who look forward to moving on from the darkest chapter of their lives.

She Has A Name offers direct services to THRIVERS: people who have left exploitative circumstances, completed formal recovery programs, and are now leading in their communities. It has been a joy to share with the few who have completed the expungement process. These individuals go on to complete higher education degrees as we partner with them in offering academic scholarships. They lead agencies, start their own organizations, and meaningfully contribute to their neighborhoods. They start families, establish stable housing, and build supportive networks. With criminal records, none of this is accessible.

Our Spring 2021 April Thacker Dream Scholarship recipient invested in reliable transportation to get to work as a trauma counselor at a local anti-human trafficking agency. The Spring 2021 Strategies for Success academic scholarship recipient has since completed her Masters degree in hospitality management and is working with a mentor to launch a career in the hospitality industry. Both of these strong and inspirational women were able to grow beyond their past thanks to records expungement.

We are grateful to join the other proponents of this bill as supporters of an equitable justice system that looks to restore those who have suffered in the hands of exploitation. Thank you to Senators Fedor and Kunze and the Ohio Senate for continuing to seek justice for victims of human trafficking.

Respectfully,

Courtney Schmackers
Executive Director



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