

**PROPONENT TESTIMONY**  
**SB 183, The Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**Heather Wilde, BSN, RN, SANE-A**  
**October 19, 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 Heather Wilde, I am a Forensic Nurse and Coordinator of a Forensic Program in Columbus. I am also an active volunteer with Out of Darkness, a chapter of Frontline Response, and serve at their drop-in center on Parson's Avenue. In addition, I lead their medical team where we strive to educate members of the healthcare field about recognizing those in the life of human trafficking. I see these individual's both in the hospital setting and coming in for comfort off the street, and the strength and perseverance that they have is like no other. I am in full support of Senate Bill 183 so that these survivors of human trafficking can become overcomers. This bill would allow them to become gainfully employed, which will ensure not only familial and housing stability, but also stability of medical needs and care, as well as growth of one's own self-worth and dignity after all that they have lived through.

I am fortunate enough to call many of these individuals who are survivors my friends. I do not believe it is a coincidence that two days prior to writing this letter, I went to a housewarming party of one of these survivors. As we all packed in her small living room, she spoke from her heart. She has not had it easy and has had to fight her way up from the very bottom that most of us cannot see, let alone understand. People like my friend Sasha need this law, they need expungement, they need this final link of their chain broken, and broken forever. Expungement is freedom, and this Bill is the pathway to that freedom.

The Safe Harbor Act and expansions have provided exceptional relief for some survivors of human trafficking in Ohio, unfortunately not all survivors qualify for expungement. S.B. 183 will leave no survivor without a life raft. It will not leave a person behind because they were trafficked on an online platform and did not receive a soliciting conviction. It will not exclude the person who had drugs forced upon them by their trafficker to control them, and they had those charges on their records. This Bill is their life raft to freedom, it leaves no one in the life of human trafficking behind.

It is an honor to stand beside my friends who are thriving in their life, they have survived the unthinkable, and in Ohio we need to support the courage and character of each and every survivor of human trafficking. The victimization must stop, these survivors should not be labeled and discredited due to their records, they are not expendable. They have impressively overcome and should be given the freedom to pursue a fresh start and be able to obtain a job, adequate housing, and independence for themselves and for their families.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 183 is essential for all those in the life of human trafficking to finally be able to exhale, to have freedom and to be seen. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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