



OHIO PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION

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Louis Tobin
Executive Director

November 17, 2021

The Honorable Andrea White
Ohio House of Representatives
The Vern Riffe Center
77 South High Street, 11th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

The Honorable Susan Manchester
Ohio House of Representatives
The Vern Riffe Center
77 South High Street, 11th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: House Bill 427 (Compelling Prostitution – Controlled Substances)

Representatives White and Manchester –

Our Association supports House Bill 427 to provide that the element “compelled” in our trafficking in persons and compelling prostitution statutes is established if the state proves that the victim’s will was overcome by a controlled substance or manipulation of a controlled substance addiction. Substance use is a significant risk factor for human trafficking victimization. According to the Polaris Project, an organization dedicated to the fight against sex and labor trafficking, in 2019, the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline reported that substance use concern was the top risk factor for sex trafficking victimization and that inducing or exploiting substance abuse issues was the primary form of force, fraud, and coercion employed by traffickers to exploit victims.¹

Prosecutors can and do consider the role that substance addiction plays in the exploitation of victims through force, fear, duress, intimidation, and fraud. We know that traffickers use drugs to encourage addiction as a means of gaining and retaining control of a victim and that they withhold drugs to coerce them to engage in sexual activity. House Bill 427, however, makes it clear that evidence of this type of activity is, by itself, enough to prove that the offender compelled the victim’s behavior. The bill makes it more likely that prosecutors will be able to secure justice for the victims of this violent crime.

¹ <https://polarisproject.org/2019-us-national-human-trafficking-hotline-statistics/>

Thank you for your work on this legislation and for your advocacy on behalf of the victims of human trafficking.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louis Tobin', written in a cursive style.

Louis Tobin
Executive Director

LT:dpm

Cc: House Criminal Justice Committee