

Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee
Collaborative to End Human Trafficking
Kirsti Mouncey, President & CEO
Proponent Testimony for HB 390
December 13, 2022

Chair Manning, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Kirsti Mouncey, I am the President & CEO of the Collaborative to End Human Trafficking. I am grateful for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 390 on behalf of my organization and all stakeholders who work so hard to protect and support victims and survivors of human trafficking.

The Collaborative to End Human Trafficking is a 15-year-old, northeast Ohio based non-profit established with the expressed mission of eradicating human trafficking in the communities we serve. The work of the Collaborative is to raise awareness and facilitate community engagement on the scourge of human trafficking, working with the 70+ organizations in our community who are all practitioner stakeholders in matters of human trafficking. The interests of my organization and our full collaborative are clearly aligned with the purpose of HB 390, to serve the interests of victims and survivors of human trafficking.

It is our position that the full and complete prosecution of sexual assault violations in cases of human trafficking cases in Ohio is and should be a priority for our communities and in state policy. As such, we support any measure that collects data and evidence that helps build a case of support in seeking justice for assault victims. Preserving the evidence of sexual assault is an important part of supporting victims and protecting their rights. HB 390 will perform an important function in prosecuting cases of human trafficking where sexual assault is at issue.

The nature of human trafficking is a problem that occurs over many years. Human trafficking victims are likely to experience many assault events over time, so each incident that can be recorded is a record of the trauma that victims experience. Preserving the physical evidence of that record helps law enforcement better understand what happened to the victim, and potentially sheds light on the circumstances involved.

From a practitioner's view, human trafficking is understood as a cycle of traumatic events that happen to an individual. Being a victim of human trafficking is a condition that happens over long periods of time, and as such, evidence of assaults can also be useful in understanding patterns of behavior of those who commit the assaults. To eradicate human trafficking our communities and policy must be able to see the big picture both of an individual's experience and to put together the mosaic of victim's experiences to understand the how and why. It is unfortunate that there is not at this point, a sufficient data collection to understand the big picture of human trafficking. HB 390 is a positive step in collecting and preserving information.

On behalf of victims/survivors of trafficking, I stand in support of HB 390, for the resources that can be brought to bear, that will allow the stories of assault victims to be clearly understood, and to aid in the process of supporting victims as they seek justice.