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**Senate Education Committee
Proponent Testimony for H.B. 147
April 9, 2024**

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Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Lisa DeGeeter, and I am the Director of Systems Advocacy and Policy Counsel for the Ohio Domestic Violence Network. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on H.B. 147, which would strengthen teacher hiring practices.

The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) is Ohio's federally designated domestic violence membership coalition, with a network of 76 local domestic violence organizations throughout the state. In calendar year 2023, ODVN programs sheltered 9,707 survivors, including 3,743 children, and provided nearly 97,531 survivors and their children with housing, legal advocacy, and other supportive services.

ODVN is supportive of H.B. 147 overall, but we do have a couple of suggestions to clarify and complement the existing language.

We appreciate that the bill wants to keep people whose conduct is "unbecoming to the teaching profession" out of classrooms. Abusive and criminal conduct should have comprehensive consequences. It is critical that the distinction is made between human traffickers and the people they sell, who are victims. In line 84 survivors of human trafficking are referred to as "offenders". We would suggest revising that language to persons convicted, to retain legal accuracy without labeling those who have been victimized as offenders.

Additionally beginning at line 68 there is a list of offenses by statute that are covered by this bill. We would suggest adding sections 2903.18 Strangulation; 2907.19 Commercial Sexual Exploitation of a Minor; and 2907.231 Engaging in Prostitution which includes



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sections (B) and (C) which address purchasing sex, so that those who attempt to purchase sex are held accountable as well.

On behalf of the Ohio Domestic Violence Network and our 76 member programs, we would like to thank Representative Fowler Arthur and Representative Miller for recognizing the importance of revising teacher hiring practices to safeguard our most vulnerable population. With refinement of the language to accurately reflect the experiences of survivors, we can avoid stigmatization and ensure comprehensive accountability for perpetrators.