



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OHIO**

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Testimony on House Bill 130, End Demand Act
Before the Senate Criminal Justice Committee
The Honorable John Eklund, Chair
By Karen Rainey, LWV Ohio Advocate
February 25, 2014

Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Seitz, and members of the committee:

I am Karen Rainey, a volunteer advocate for the League of Women Voters of Ohio.

The League is a member-driven, grassroots organization that adopts its positions for advocacy through member study and support. Our recently completed study of human trafficking in Ohio led to the adoption of positions that align well with the provisions of the proposed End Demand Act.

Specifically, the League believes that all minors who have been commercially sexually exploited or forced into slave labor should be legally considered as victims. Currently, Ohio law does not agree with federal law, which does consider all minors as victims. The proposed provision in this bill would rectify that situation by eliminating the requirement of House Bill 262 that 16 and 17 year olds must be a victim of human trafficking in order for the solicitor (john) to be guilty of importuning.

The League also supports strategies to reduce the demand for commercial sex and forced labor trafficking, and this bill includes several:

- Adding “electronic means” as an illegal method of advertising to promote prostitution;
- Increasing the statute of limitations for trafficking to 20 years;
- Increasing the penalty from a misdemeanor to a felony for purchasing sex from a minor;
- Requiring that a purchaser of sex from a minor register as a tier two sex offender; and
- Notifying a spouse if a person is arrested and charged with a trafficking offense.

In addition to its position on human trafficking, the League has strong positions advocating for the prevention of child abuse and neglect and the prevention of violence. It is under these positions that we support the termination of parental rights if parents are found guilty of trafficking their own child. It is difficult to imagine a more heinous crime.

We also support adequate funding for the prosecution of traffickers and consumers and for the education and training of law enforcement, service providers, and the general public to enhance awareness of this issue.

We respectfully ask that you enact this legislation as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your time.

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