



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OHIO**

17 South High Street, Suite 650 • Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone (614) 469-1505 • Fax (614) 469-7918
www.lwvohio.org

Testimony on House Bill 130, End Demand Act
Before the House Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Jim Butler, Chair
By Karen Rainey, LWV Ohio Advocate
May 8, 2013

Chairman Butler, Vice Chair Pelanda, 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. Last year, the LWV Ohio completed its study of human trafficking in Ohio and adopted 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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