

## LWV Ohio Statehouse Day – April 26, 2016

### Human Trafficking: Progress Continues

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Human trafficking, both labor and sex trafficking, continues to be a multi-million dollar enterprise. Ohio has significantly improved its capacity to address the problems of human trafficking (modern-day slavery) through new legislation and aggressive law enforcement. Over the past ten years, many more people have become aware of the problems and have acted to protect those most vulnerable to exploitation, especially children.

The emphasis today is on expanding awareness through education and training. Licensure for several professional groups now requires continuing education on legislation and trends in human trafficking. Curricula are in development for working with school children in grades K-12. Police departments are creating and participating in human trafficking task forces that are more effectively identifying potential victims and rescuing them and referring them for social services. The Attorney General's Human Trafficking Commission continues to meet regularly to coordinate and inform statewide efforts to curb trafficking.

Several Leagues continue to be concerned with human trafficking issues and continue to be supportive of efforts on behalf of survivors. This work is best done in cooperation with other local organizations. A new map shows that most of Ohio is now covered by anti-trafficking coalitions. Go to [www.publicsafety.ohio.gov/ht/coalitions](http://www.publicsafety.ohio.gov/ht/coalitions) to see the service areas and the names of the coalitions.

In the legislative area, a controversial bill is pending that would require DNA testing of persons committing misdemeanor crimes such as voyeurism or soliciting so that this information is available in resolving rape cases and other more serious crimes. **House Bill 283** is supported by the Prosecuting Attorneys Association and opposed by the ACLU. The bill was initially requested by law enforcement as a tool to quickly identify criminals, but the ACLU sees the bill as a slippery slope leading to more intrusive government expansion into private lives. LWV Ohio has no position on DNA testing and has taken no position on the bill, which appears to be stalled in the House Judiciary Committee since last November.

Another bill, **House Bill 268**, Human Trafficking - Prostitution Penalties, expands the list of human-trafficking related convictions and delinquency adjudications that may be expunged. The bill, in the House Judiciary Committee, has had only one hearing and does not appear to have traction at this time.

**The Message:** Combatting human trafficking does not guarantee an end with the passage of legislation. Please continue to join and support your local coalitions in their work.