



**Senate Bill 183 – EXPUNGE CRIMINAL RECORDS-TRAFFICKING VICTIMS**  
**Before Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**By Karen Rainey**  
**October 5, 2021**

Chairman Manning, Vice-Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the committee: Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Karen Rainey, a specialist 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 study of human trafficking led to the adoption of positions that align well with the provisions of the proposed legislation that enable the victims of human trafficking to reintegrate into society.

We have learned that the crimes committed by victims of human trafficking are most often not by choice but by threat of harm. The records of these crimes should not be held against them – they need to be expunged. Too often, a criminal record prevents a victim of human trafficking from obtaining employment or stable housing, the bedrocks needed for rebuilding a life, and becoming a productive member of society.

Expunging the criminal records of human trafficking victims would enable and empower them to take back their life, but this bill is not simply altruistic. Reintegrating such persons into the workplace and society would be a benefit to the economy and to the state. The economy is suffering a severe labor shortage in which all kinds of businesses and industries are desperate for workers. This bill could expand the potential pool of employees, and thus contribute to the state's tax revenue.

We respectfully ask that you enact this legislation as quickly as possible. It would be an excellent step forward for Ohio and allow progression to a better future to take place.

Thank you for your time.

*The League of Women Voters of Ohio was formed in May 1920 out of Ohio's woman suffrage movement. The League is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League has over 4000 members and 32 local Leagues across the Buckeye State.*