



SENATOR TERESA FEDOR

January 20, 2010

**Senate Resolution 133
National Human Trafficking
Awareness Day in Ohio**

Sponsor Testimony

Committees:

State & Local Government & Veterans'
Affairs- Ranking Member
Education
Highways & Transportation
Government Oversight

Ohio Arts Council
Military Activation Task Force
Ohio School Facilities Commission
Trafficking in Persons Study
Commission
State Council on Educational
Opportunity for Military Children
National Statuary Hall Collection Study
Commission
Committee to Study Public Funded
Child Care Services

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to give sponsor testimony for Senate Resolution 133 recognizing January 11 as "National Human Trafficking Awareness Day" in Ohio.

Each year January 11 is set aside to observe and raise awareness of human trafficking and end this modern-day form of slavery.

First, it is very important to understand the problem before we address the solution. This is a good first step in eradicating the problem of Human Trafficking --- starting right here in Ohio. I want to start by thanking Senator Jim Hughes for participating in the First Annual Human Trafficking Awareness Day Forum last week here at the Statehouse.

As a means of understanding trafficking in our country and the State of Ohio, I want to share with you excerpts of C. Frank Figliuzzi's comments from the First Annual Human Trafficking Awareness Day forum we held at the Statehouse last week on Jan 11th. He is the Special Agent in Charge for the FBI in Cleveland. His comments truly show how dire our problem is in Ohio and how important awareness is in this battle.

The domestic trafficking of children for the purpose of prostitution is rapidly growing and national in scope. FBI analysis has determined that at least 25% of adult prostitutes were enticed into prostitution as juveniles. In June 2003, the FBI launched the Innocence Lost National Initiative to target the criminal enterprises responsible for the trafficking of children. We have established task forces, share intelligence, and train personnel on the sexual exploitation of children. The mobility and multi-jurisdictional nature of investigations has made it critical for law enforcement to join together, and enlist our community partners, to address this matter.

The Innocence Lost initiative addresses domestic child prostitution through 40 task forces and working groups around the nation, including one in Toledo, Ohio. Investigations launched by these task forces have successfully led to the convictions of over 400 pimps, madams, and their associates who exploit children through prostitution. These convictions have resulted in lengthy sentences including multiple 25-years to life sentences and the seizure of over \$3 million dollars in assets. Ninety-two criminal enterprises have been disrupted, and 44 of those were totally dismantled.

To date, Innocence Lost has recovered 900 children. It is through partnerships with many non governmental agencies, such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) that we have been able to enjoy such a degree of success.

Ohio has been identified by the FBI as a hub for human trafficking. The FBI's Innocence Lost Initiatives that have taken place here in Ohio, in the last two years alone, have resulted in the arrest of 100 adults, and the recovery of 20 children, including some who are pre-teenagers.

To further highlight the problem of human trafficking in Ohio, currently, the Northwest Ohio Violent Crimes Against Children Task force ranks Toledo 4th in the nation for active investigations, arrests and rescues of children forced into prostitution. This is shocking when you think of other cities in America that rank much larger. Nationally, Toledo follows substantially larger cities such as Miami, Florida and Atlanta.

Since 2006, over 70 Toledo-area children have been rescued or identified locally and over 100 pimps identified. The Toledo area was selected by FBI Headquarters and the US DOJ, for increased resources because of a historical and continuing child prostitution problem, related to such factors as interstate trucking and highway convergence, the economic and drug environment, and the presence of known families of pimps in that area.

Certainly, Toledo is not the only city with a problem in trafficking. Recently, a case in Chillicothe made national news. A Chillicothe man lured young women from Craigslist, My Space and YouTube into prostitution. He faces a maximum sentence of: life in prison for sex trafficking by force; five years in prison for the prostitution conspiracy; 10 years in prison for transportation for prostitution; and 20 years in prison for enticement.

Make no mistake, Human Trafficking is found in every city, suburb and rural area in Ohio.

It is estimated that 200,000 citizens are victimized every year in the U.S. It is the second most profitable crime in the world.

Traffickers make 5 times more money selling humans than selling drugs and they boast that it is easier!

The resolution *promises* to continue Ohio's tradition of advancing fundamental human rights by increasing awareness and encouraging public involvement.

The resolution states there is a statewide imperative to eliminate human trafficking, including early or forced marriage, commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, labor obtained through debt bondage, and involuntary servitude, slavery, and slavery by descent.

It is important for Ohioans to stop and take notice of the atrocities being committed against children and exploited workers in our state for someone else's profit.

Whether they are trapped in forced sexual or labor exploitation, human trafficking victims can not walk away, but are held in service through force, threats, and fear. All too often suffering from horrible physical and sexual abuse, it is hard for them to imagine that there might be a place of refuge.

In conclusion, a March 21, 2007 letter from the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center noted in 1802 Ohio legislators voted to outlaw slavery positioning our state at the forefront of the abolitionist movement. Today we face ending a new form of slavery and tyranny plaguing our great state; human trafficking. They stated correctly human trafficking is real. It is slavery. And we must end it.

Passing Senate Resolution 133 is an important step to combat human trafficking in Ohio. The event held on January 11 this year attracted over 200 people to the statehouse. The event brought awareness to the issue and engaged our citizens and organizations to continue to be a part of ending human trafficking in Ohio.

Thank you, Chairman Grendell, for allowing me to give testimony on Senate Resolution 133.