SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE

SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 235

APRIL 14, 2010

TESTIMONY OF

OHIO BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

Senator Grendell and members of the Judicial Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

My name is Leslie Akers. On behalf of Ohio Business & Professional Women (Ohio BPW), I am here today to testify as a proponent of Substitute Senate Bill 235, the Human Trafficking bill.

Ohio BPW is the leading advocate of working woman. We have been in existence for 90 years. We participate in many community activities, including sponsoring thrift shops, holding Equal Pay Day Events, mentoring, working with Children Services, and helping women who have been abused. We are also a national organization.

We have a legislative platform and a PAC. As part of our legislative platform we have pledged to:

"Actively work to strengthen and enforce legal protection for all individuals who are victims of violent acts including domestic and/or sexual violence; promote violence prevention programs; support services and facilities for survivors of this violence and the funding thereof; and support legislation, which provides compensatory and punitive damage awards to victims."

Senator Fedor's testimony gave a great deal of information about the overall situation and, in particular the growing problem in Ohio. Especially disturbing is the information that these slavers are targeting our children.

Ohio BPW supports this legislation because it is in keeping with our legislative platform. The bill makes additional definitions for "involuntary servitude", sexually oriented obscenity, and makes numerous activities involved in human trafficking a felony of the second degree. (Prison sentence of two to eight years.) The proposed bill also includes, within the current definition of Human Trafficking, involuntary servitude.

Senator Fedor's testimony also listed a number of organizations that are stakeholders in the bill. Ohio BPW wishes to be added to that list.