



Office of Representative Teresa Fedor, 45th District

End Slavery Cincinnati, Human Trafficking Interview Q & A
July 17, 2013

What initially sparked your interest in human trafficking?

Rep. Fedor:

Eight years ago, I found human trafficking was happening in my district. This first came to public attention in 2005, through Operation Precious Cargo in Harrisburg, PA. The FBI found that of 151 victims of sex trafficking, 45 were children, and 78 of the 151 were from Toledo, Ohio.

Ohio Trafficking in Persons Commission found Toledo, Ohio to have alarmingly high rates of human trafficking. Since you were born Toledo and worked there earlier in your career, do you think this has contributed to your interest in fight human trafficking?

Rep. Fedor:

Yes. I was a Senator at the time and was shocked along with my community that the FBI recognized Toledo as a "significant origin city" for child traffickers, meaning pimps find victims here and transport them to other locations. I took personal offense that children in Toledo were being used as sex slaves.

Since your involvement with anti-human trafficking efforts, have you found or experienced anything that surprised you?

Rep. Fedor:

One thing that has surprised me is the scope of the criminal operation and market demand. The buying and selling of people is a big business. World-wide revenues are estimated at \$32 billion annually and in the United States it is a \$9.8 billion industry. A young girl can earn as much as \$720,000 per year for a pimp – tax free.

House Bill 262 that you sponsored had such an impact on Ohio's capacity to respond to human trafficking. What is it about this new law, House Bill 130 that you have introduced, do you believe adds to the efforts towards ending human trafficking?

Rep. Fedor:

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Sub H.B. 130 – End Demand Act, addresses the market-driven demand for commercial sex trafficking along with other important provisions. Provisions include 9 aimed at reducing demand and 8 provisions aimed at strengthening trafficking victims’ rights. Key provisions of the End Demand Act include harsher penalties for the solicitation of minors; removing the need to prove compulsion, prohibiting the purchase of advertising space of a minor for sexual activity for hire, increasing the statute of limitations, terminating parental rights and restricting the use of “massage” and related terms in advertisements by unlicensed professionals.

Individuals willing to buy commercial sex expose vulnerable children and adults to the abusive realities of human trafficking. Left unchecked, human trafficking will continue to flourish in our communities. Those who purchase sex, known as buyers or johns, are fueling the commercial sex industry and contribute to the exploitation of Ohio’s children. To reduce the demand for purchasing commercial sex, Ohio must improve and sustain policies and pass laws focused on the buyers of illegal sex. Sub. H.B. 130 will decrease demand by holding offenders more accountable.

What have been the major obstacles in passing this bill?

Rep. Fedor:

Over the years, creating a new section in the criminal code was no easy task. It is a common adage that prostitution is the oldest profession in the world; but I strongly disagree, it is the oldest oppression of women in the world. With regards to H.B. 262 – Safe Harbor Act, there was a great deal of resistance. Some of the legislative obstacles that had to be overcome for H.B. 262 to pass included a fear that Ohio was on its way to decriminalizing prostitution; at the other extreme, that Ohio was still treating victims who are minors like criminals by involving the justice system; and that H.B. 262 would be costly.

As the world learns how to better build approaches to human trafficking, what focuses do you believe future legislation will take?

Rep. Fedor:

We are learning that many minor victims have spent time within the child welfare system prior to being trafficked. According to a report by the Ohio Human Trafficking Commission’s Research and Analysis Sub-Committee, findings revealed for those who became victims of the child sex trade, 40% were also previous victims of neglect and abuse at home and in their community. Based on this research, I believe future legislation will address the child welfare system and its need for reform.

You have been heavily involved in the major state anti-trafficking legislation including House Bill 262 and 130. What other anti-human trafficking initiatives or involvements have you worked on or are working on currently?

Rep. Fedor:

I currently sit on the Trafficking in Persons Study Commission as the Chairperson of the Legal and Legislative Sub-Committee. An important part of Ohio’s progress was accomplished through Attorney Generals’ Richard Cordray and Mike Dewine. They both agreed to establish a Human Trafficking Commission to research the problem in Ohio. With their leadership and dedicated team of people, we have moved the ball further down the field. I’m also a member of the Governor’s Task Force; a cross-

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agency comprehensive response to human trafficking in Ohio, issuing recommendations on anti-trafficking efforts.

What actions do you propose people take if they want to join the fight against human trafficking?

Rep. Fedor:

- Contact your State Senators and ask them to support Representative Fedor's **Sub. H.B. 130, End Demand Act**, human trafficking legislation. Tell them that additional Ohio human trafficking legislation like, **Sub. H.B. 130, End Demand Act** is necessary.
- Report instances of suspected human trafficking or request resources on human trafficking by contacting the **National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC)** at **1-8788-3737-888** or www.traffickingresourcecenter.org
- Read the Executive Order recently signed by President Barack Obama concerning labor trafficking, in the U.S. and abroad.

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