

Monday, January 28, 2013

Ohio ramps up the fight against human trafficking: editorial

Ohio can be proud of the progress it is making against human trafficking, a scourge on society that runs the gamut from the enslavement of young women brought to the United States to work in massage parlors to neighborhood pimps who prey on girls already vulnerable because they were victims of childhood neglect, sexual abuse or family abandonment.

Entering 2012, two national organizations that rate states on their response to human trafficking put Ohio among the "dirty dozen" of states that had taken virtually no legislative notice of the problem. That changed with the passage of H.B. 262, which was sponsored by Rep. Teresa Fedor, a Toledo Democrat, and signed in June by Gov. John Kasich. Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine has been implementing provisions of the bill, including conducting training sessions, seminars and webinars for law enforcement personnel, social workers and educators.

The law is designed to assist victims in getting needed services to escape the trafficking dynamic, provide increased support to law enforcement and toughen penalties on traffickers.

Taking crime seriously

The penalty for human trafficking is now closer to that of federal law, making it a first-degree felony with a mandatory prison term of at least 10 years. Intimidating a victim to discourage her from testifying in court is a second-degree felony.

The law provides a mechanism for victims of human trafficking to apply to the court to have their prior records for solicitation or prostitution expunged, giving them an opportunity to start a new life.

Editorial continued here: <http://www.vindy.com/news/2013/jan/28/ohio-ramps-up-the-fight-against-human-tr/>

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