

News Release



Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County Executive Shapiro and County Council Pass Legislation Recognizing the month of January as National Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month

Earlier this week, Summit County Executive Shapiro signed legislation passed by Summit County Council recognizing the month of January 2018 as National Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month in Summit County. The legislation, requested by County Councilmember Paula Prentice, emphasizes the need for public awareness in identifying suspicious activity and warning signs of human trafficking.

As reported by the U.S. Department of State, it is estimated that between 600,000 and 800,000 individuals, the majority of whom are women and girls, are exploited and trafficked throughout the United States and across its borders. Of those individuals, approximately 1,000 minors in Ohio are currently being sex trafficked, and more than 2,000 others are at risk of being trafficked for labor, prostitution, and domestic servitude.

“Human trafficking is a horrific crime that seeks out its victims, many of whom are children,” said County Executive Ilene Shapiro. “Protecting our children and at-risk members of our community from this threat is of utmost importance. In creating a greater awareness, we will be able to better identify the warning signs and changes of behavior due to exploitation, and report suspicious activity appropriately.”

Some of the warning signs exhibited in trafficked children specifically, are behavioral changes, signs of abuse, drug addiction, homelessness, running away from home, lack of attendance in school, frequent unexplained travel, and inappropriate relationships. Children may be targeted via social media, online forums, and in public places. Sex trafficking victims on average, are 12-14 years old when they are first entered into the commercial sex market, though many are younger.

“Increasing public awareness and recognition of human trafficking is critically important in helping to identify victims and crack down on this horrendous crime,” said County Councilmember Paula Prentice. “It is my hope that with increased knowledge of warning signs and greater attention brought to this issue, we will see a greater number of exploited individuals regain control of their lives.”

“It is important for Summit County to recognize the month of January 2018 as National Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month,” said County Council President John Schmidt. “Thousands of Ohioans are either currently victims of trafficking, or at risk of being trafficked and it is extremely important for our community to be aware of this exploitation and how to identify suspicious activity.”

For more information please visit: www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/national-human-trafficking-hotline/the-nhtrc/overview.

If you would like to report suspected trafficking please contact the National Resource Center hot line toll-free at (888) 373-7888

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