

News Release



Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
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County Executive Shapiro and County Council Pass Legislation Supporting the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act of 2017

Earlier this week, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and Summit County Council passed local legislation expressing support for the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act of 2017. The legislation, requested by County Councilmember-at-large Elizabeth Walters, urges President Trump and the United States Congress to also support the act, which will close a loophole in the federal law that has shielded website companies conducting activities such as illegal sex trafficking.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has reported an alarming increase in reports of suspected child sex trafficking due to third party users increasingly using the internet to sell children for sex. Since 2010, sex trafficking reports have skyrocketed by more than 800 percent. A website called Backpage was part of an investigation that found the website generated more than 80% of all revenue from U.S. online commercial sex advertising. Backpage actively facilitated criminal sex trafficking, according to the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, yet despite these findings, the company has been able to dodge legal action brought against them by victims of the sex trade.

“The Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act is an incredibly important step forward in the fight to end human trafficking, and to hold those who facilitate this crime accountable for their actions,” said Executive Shapiro. “It is time to close loopholes that prevent complicit parties from being brought to justice and I urge President Trump and Congress to support this Act.”

Ohio Senators Rob Portman and Sherrod Brown joined 27 other Senators to introduce the Stop Enabling Sex Trafficking Act in July, 2017. In order to close the existing federal loophole, the Act will make three reforms to the Communications Decency Act. 1.) It will allow victims of sex trafficking to seek justice against websites that knowingly facilitate crimes against them by removing the law's unintended protection for online sex traffickers. 2.) It will help law enforcement by allowing the prosecution of websites that knowingly assist, support or facilitate a violation of already existing federal sex trafficking laws, and 3.) It will enable state law enforcement- not just the Department of Justice- to take legal action against businesses that violate federal sex trafficking laws.

“Support for this Act is crucial in giving victims of sex trafficking a voice,” said County Council President John Schmidt. “For too long companies have been profiting off of human trafficking with little or no legal consequence and the Stop Enabling Sex Trafficking Act will help bring an end to that.”

For more information:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/1693>

<http://www.missingkids.com/>

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