Ohio State Facts

Criminalization of DMST

1. The state trafficking in persons law does not distinguish between the sex trafficking of adults versus minors and requires proof that force, threat of force, or fraud was used in the commission of the crime in any case.

Buyers

2. Ohio Attorney General Mike Dewine was one of 51 Attorneys General who signed a letter to Backpage.com calling on the company to disclose its efforts to identify and delete advertisements that facilitate sex trafficking, specifically of minors.[1]
3. For prosecution of buyers under the state sex trafficking law, Ohio requires proof that the buyer knew the victim was compelled to engage in commercial sex acts, narrowing its potential to be applicable.

Traffickers

4. In August 2011, a federal grand jury indicted Pearline Richardson of Cleveland on seven counts related to sex trafficking of a minor by force, fraud and coercion and possession, distribution and exploitation of a minor to make child pornography. The 16-year-old runaway had been taken in by Richardson and forced to commit prostitution and pose for pornography before she contacted the Crimes Against Children Task Force to report the crime.[2]
5. Deric Willoughby pleaded guilty to federal charges related to the sex trafficking of 14 and 15-year-old cousins. Willoughby and his accomplices attempted to prostitute the girls at local hotels and truck stops in Toledo before they were rescued by police.[3]

Child Victims

6. According to a 2010 prevalence study done for the attorney general, approximately 1,000 runaway and homeless minors are at risk for exploitation in Ohio's commercial sex trade every year.[4]
7. Prostitution offenses are not limited in application to adults, do not identify a juvenile involved in prostitution as a victim of trafficking in persons, and provide no affirmative defenses to a minor charged with the offense. As a result, juveniles could enter the justice system and be placed in detention despite their status as victims.

Criminal Justice Tools for Investigation and Prosecution

8. Toledo's Northwest Ohio Innocence Lost Task Force has identified 60 minor victims of sex trafficking since it started in 2006, of which 75 percent (45) were from Lucas County. Ohio has been involved in almost every national investigation into domestic minor sex trafficking since the passing of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. Those include: Operation Precious Cargo, and Operation Cross Country I, II, III, and IV.[5]

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[1] http://www.tn.gov/attorneygeneral/cases/backpage/backpageletter.pdf
[2] http://www.justice.gov/usao/ohn/news/2011/17aug2011_3.html
[3] http://www.toledoblade.com/local/2006/08/29/Trio-plead-guilty-in-prostitution-of-2-teenage-cousins.html
[4] http://centralohiorescueandrestore.org/uploads/Ohio_Trafficking_in_Persons_Research_Sub-Committee_Report_2010_2-8_Final.pdf.
[5] http://centralohiorescueandrestore.org/uploads/Ohio_Trafficking_in_Persons_Research_Sub-Committee_Report_2010_2-8_Final.pdf.