



How Inclusion and Bipartisanship can 'End Demand' for Human Trafficking

September 7, 2014 — Homeland Security Today

On June 20, I watched Ohio's governor challenge others to re-engage, step up and do something to make a difference in the value system on which our country was founded as he signed The "End Demand Act (House Bill 130) into law. The legislation is intended to reduce the market- driven demand for human trafficking by targeting the "johns." It's the latest in a round of successes in Ohio's fight against human trafficking.

The bill achieved unanimous support in a time of gridlock. But we all know that nothing is simple or easy. In hopes that more localities might take up this issue that was effectively addressed in Ohio, I would like to highlight some of the most successful aspects of the process.

In this case, grassroots efforts started more than a decade ago to serve the victims of human trafficking, who at the time were seen as perpetrators of prostitution instead of victims of coercion. A champion soon emerged in State Rep. Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo). With a diverse group of advocates, the Safe Harbor Act and other efforts to combat human trafficking became reality.

Fedor drew on this grassroots movement to increase the penalty for purchasing sex from a minor and end demand by initiating a letter writing campaign to all decisionmakers — even the dog catcher! She then requested an appointment with the newly elected Republican governor. No one said no. At the bill signing ceremony, Fedor noted that, "Everyone had the freedom to put in ideas and hash them out and see what was going to work."

One of the most successful strategies employed in this process was the partnership of government agencies, law enforcement, local nonprofit advocates led by the Salvation Army, academics and concerned citizens. As the result of law enforcement action on some major trafficking cases that highlighted the problem in Ohio, the state attorney

general created a Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force which includes representatives from local police departments, FBI, US Customs and Immigration Service and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

The Attorney General's Human Trafficking Commission reconvened in 2011 to better understand and assist in developing solutions to the problem. It included elected and appointed officials, local, state and federal law enforcement, religious groups, schools and public and private agencies. The attorney general's office also provides training and guidance to law enforcement, attorneys, hospitals and other entities to help better identify and support victims. Six subcommittees were also established to address human trafficking in their areas of expertise: law enforcement; prevention, education and awareness; research and analysis; demand reduction; and legal and legislative.

The legal and legislative subcommittee focuses on reviewing state laws and drafting or redrafting them to ensure that Ohio is among those states that place a high priority on ending human trafficking. Fedor understood that everyone needed to be involved from the beginning, so instead of having to fight the prosecutor on language or creating legislation that law enforcement could not enforce, they were all at the table from day one.

I watched as the drafts went round and round through the Senate Criminal Justice Committee then back again. The attorney general's office, along with other government agencies and advocates, was represented and asked to comment throughout the process. National organizations were consulted on best practices.

Governor John Kasich (R-Ohio) formed The Ohio Human Trafficking TaskForce in 2012 to bring his cabinet together to drive the issue home. The group consisted of members from the Office of Health Transformation, the departments of jobs and family services, agriculture, mental health and addiction services, education, Medicaid, youth services, public safety, health and the Ohio Board of Cosmetology.

This bipartisan, all-inclusive process resulted in unanimous passage of the End Demand Act. Governor Kasich said it best when, at the bill signing ceremony, he stated: "We don't have time for cynicism and divisions and polarization ... this is a good illustration that we can make a difference."

Dr. Christi Scott Bartman is an associate professor at [American Public University](#) and teaches in the Masters of Public Administration and Public Policy programs. She teaches across the spectrum of history, politics, public administration and the law. She currently serves on the Board of the Ohio Program Evaluators' Group and the Ohio Legal and Legislative Subcommittee on Human Trafficking.



HOMELAND SECURITY TODAY LATEST POSTS

The Government Technology & Services Coalition's Homeland Security Today (HSToday) is the premier news and information resource for the homeland security community, dedicated to elevating the discussions and insights that can support a safe and secure nation. A non-profit magazine and media platform, HSToday provides readers with the whole story, placing facts and comments in context to inform debate and drive realistic solutions to some of the nation's most vexing security challenges.



LEAVE A REPLY

You must be [logged in](#) to post a comment.

 

Recent Posts

[Dan Coats Out at ODNI; Trump Picks Texas Congressman to Lead Intel Community](#)

[Supreme Court: Trump Can Use Pentagon Funds for Border Wall](#)

[Department of Defense Contracts for July 26, 2019](#)

[GAO Uncovers Weaknesses in Federal Information Security](#)

Subject Matter Areas

Airport & Aviation Security

Biometrics & ID Management

Border Security

Counterterrorism

Customs & Immigration

Cybersecurity

Education and Training

Emergency Preparedness

Emerging Innovation

Federal Government

Human Trafficking

Information Sharing

Information Technology

Infrastructure Security

Intelligence

Interoperable Communications

Law Enforcement and Public Safety

Leadership/Management

Maritime Security

Pandemic/Biohazard

State/Local Government

Strategic Communications

Surveillance, Protection & Detection

Terrorism Study

Transportation Security

◀ PREVIOUS STORY

DNDO Securing the Cities Program Expanded to National Capital Region

NEXT STORY ▶

Our Electric Substations Need Protection Beyond Fences

LATEST FROM GUEST COMMENTARIES



Platform Preferences: Jihadis Thrive on ‘Telegram’ App’s Versatility, Making it a Top Online Terror Tool

It’s been a year since Twitter began taking seriously the removal of



NEW – Former FAM Agent Says He’s Not Surprised it’s Still A Mess

After reading the Homeland Security Today report, Federal Air Marshals Fail to



SPECIAL ANALYSIS: Antiquities Sales Supporting ISIS Fails the Test of Robustness

Dr. Neil Brodie, an archaeologist, academic and campaigner for tighter antiquities trade



How Our Leaders Should Be Protecting the Homeland

The United States continues to face security threats while the new administration



Hacking Goes Mainstream—Banks Rob Customers, Olympians Discredited and Potential for Election Fraud

It seems not a single day passes without a 21st Century version

 

All content copyright ©2019 Homeland Security Today. All rights reserved.

