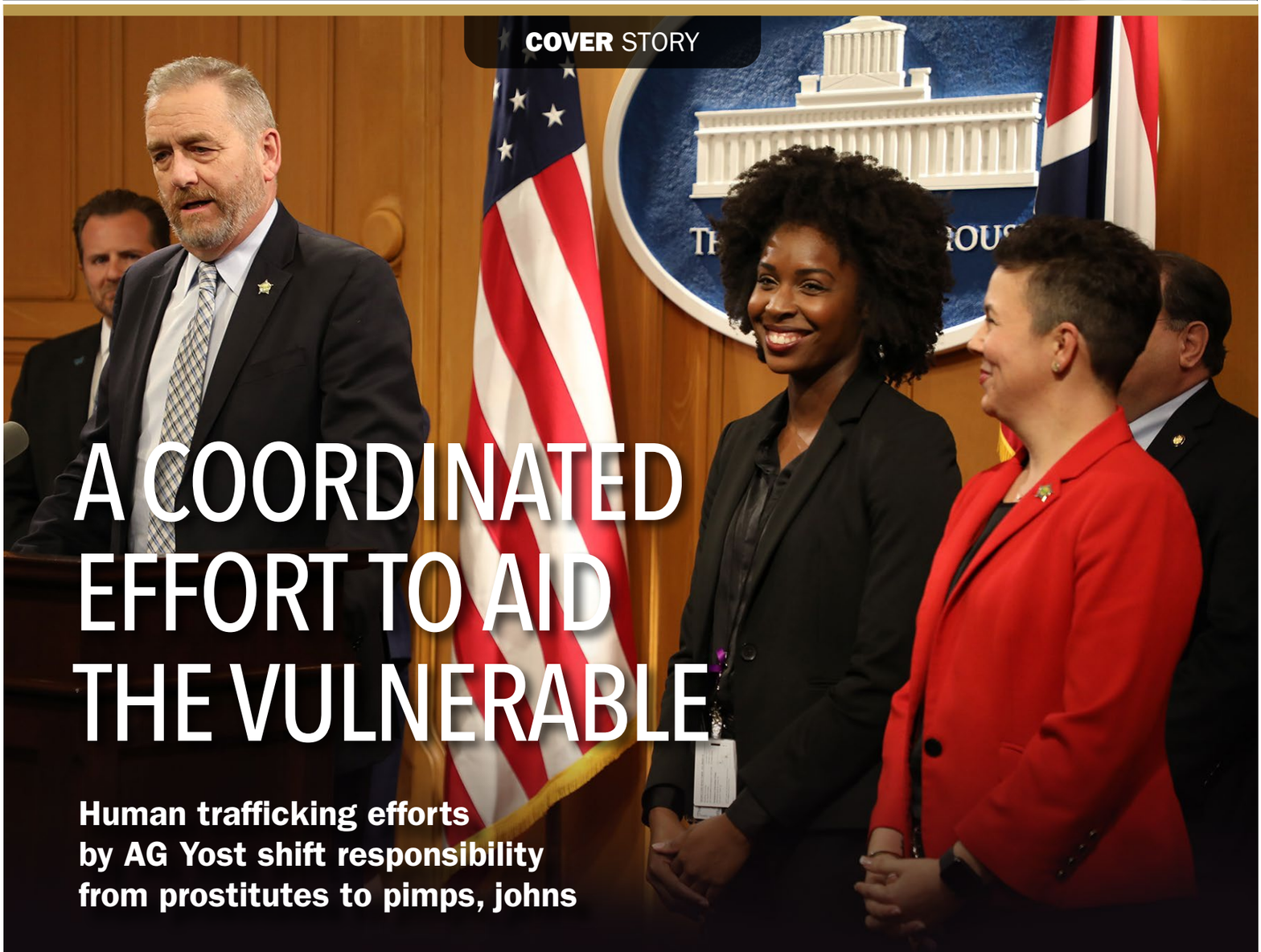
ON THE JOB
CRIMINAL JUSTICE UPDATE



COVER STORY

A COORDINATED EFFORT TO AID THE VULNERABLE

Human trafficking efforts by AG Yost shift responsibility from prostitutes to pimps, johns

"Pimps play on three things: ignorance, low self-esteem and the desire to be loved," says Ohio State University Professor Elaine Richardson, a survivor of human trafficking.

People with such vulnerabilities live in every part of Ohio, encapsulating why human trafficking is a problem affecting the whole state.

"The fact that you don't see it doesn't mean it's not happening," Attorney General Dave Yost said. "It means that it's happening in the shadows. People don't want it to be seen, and, for decades, our society was blind to the scale of the problem and blind to those trapped in it."

During the first 11 months of 2019 alone, law enforcement task forces operating under the authority of the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission rescued 110 trafficking victims

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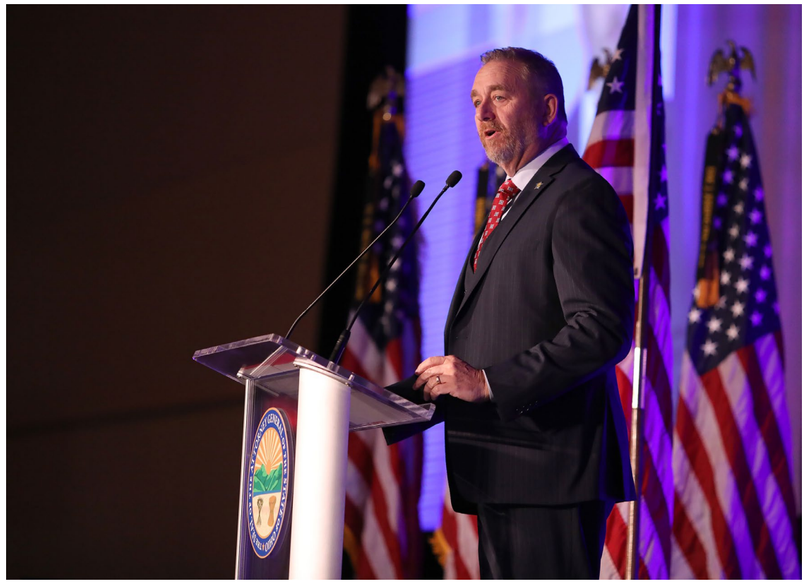
Above: From left, Ohio Attorney General **Dave Yost** introduces **Jomel Aird**, director of victim services for human trafficking, and **Jennifer Rausch**, legal director for the Human Trafficking Initiative, at a press conference held to outline proposed legislation.

FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



Morrow Police Officer Jeffrey Phegley was the kind of young man who'd start off his shift singing to co-workers.

On the day in 1987 when he was murdered, the 22-year-old also had visited his sick grandmother before coming to work, a shift he had volunteered to cover for the chief of the small department.

You see, stepping up was a way of life for Officer Phegley, who regularly volunteered with the Red Cross, a hospital and the local ski patrol. He had also volunteered on a presidential campaign and interned with a U.S. congressman, but his heart was in law enforcement.

He had a bright future dedicated to helping Ohioans, but Anthony Wayne McIntosh stole that promise.

On that cold day in January 1987, McIntosh had thrown back eight or nine beers. The 20-year-old had stashed a sawed-off shotgun in his car after swearing to a friend that he would kill the next officer who tried to stop him.

When Officer Phegley pulled over McIntosh for driving 48 mph in a school zone, the younger man fired the illegal weapon and fled.

Officer Phegley was not killed because of something he did or did not do. He died on the street — 150 shotgun pellets embedded in his chest and heart — simply because he was a police officer.

The young officer never got the chance to help another Morrow resident, sing another silly song for his co-workers or get married and pass to any children his dedication to make the world a better place. The effects of this crime will ripple through the generations until the end of time.

So it is essential that we remember who Officer Phegley was and what he stood for.

Likewise, we must remember Dayton Police Detective Jorge Del Rio, who was killed 32 years later, during a raid on drug traffickers this past November.

But there is something more we owe Phegley and Del Rio — ensuring that their killers receive a just punishment.

That is not just for the families of those fallen officers, who are forced to live with a hole ripped through their lives. It is for all of Ohio. Every time we lose an officer, we lose all of the future good he or she would have done.

Take Detective Del Rio as an example. The 55-year-old father of five — who once saved a teen from drowning and, another time, prevented a double murder for hire — specialized in undercover work that took drugs off the street and sent traffickers to prison.

When the man who killed Detective Del Rio fired his gun, he stole from the officer's family and from each of us.

Yes, the killing of a police officer is an attack on you and your family, as well as me and my family. That is because the rule of law is the foundation of our society. Officers like Phegley and Del Rio step up to take on those who threaten us. As a result, law-abiding folks don't have to; we can live in peace and security, free from violence and fear.

In exchange for police putting their lives on the line, we must do what we can to protect officers. Thus we arm them with guns and body armor, train them to fight criminals and provide them with other crime-fighting technology.

We support tough punishment for those who kill officers. A strong response serves as a deterrent and provides justice for, in essence, two crimes — the harm to the officer as a person and the harm society suffers when one of its guardians is killed.

That is why I commend the Ohio Parole Board for refusing to free Anthony Wayne McIntosh after a hearing in November, and why my heart goes out to Officer Phegley's loved ones, who once more were forced to relive the worst tragedy of their lives.

I hope — for the sake of Detective Del Rio's widow and daughters, for every officer in Ohio and the nation, and for the rest of us — that the men responsible for the Dayton officer's death get the full measure of justice they deserve.

Yours,

Dave Yost
Ohio Attorney General

ON THE JOB
CRIMINAL JUSTICE UPDATE

On the Job is typically published four times a year by the Ohio Attorney General's Office.

To offer story ideas, contact Editor Jenny Applegate at **614-995-0328** or **Jennifer.Applegate@OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov**. Sign up for the electronic edition at **www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/EmailUpdates**.

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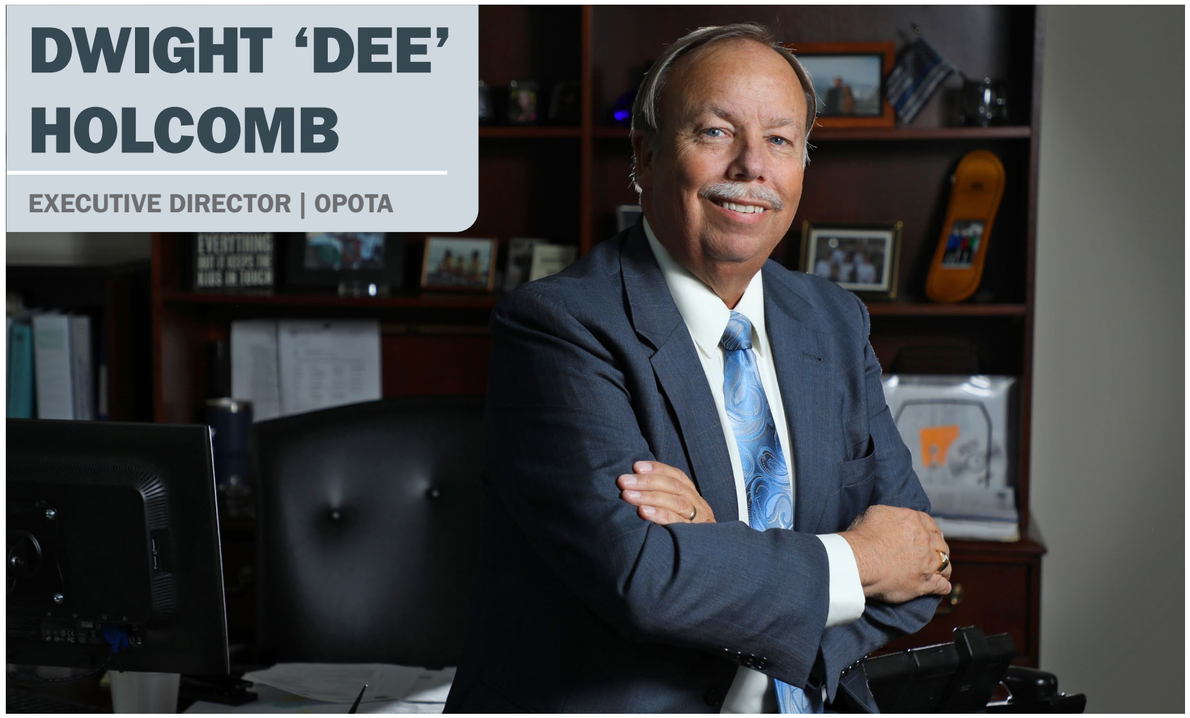
Q&A

DWIGHT 'DEE' HOLCOMB

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | OPOTA



What drew you to a career in policing?

In middle school, we had career day and I went around to all of the booths to see the options. One of the people who was there was a police officer who was really engaging. He talked about how it was a public service, and, yeah, you catch the bad guys. He also said it was a job for people who enjoy being outdoors and getting involved. It sparked my interest.

Then, when I was in college, I did a ride-along with a police agency and said, "Yeah, this is what I want to do." And here I am.

What attracted you to this job?

With my background in law enforcement, it became a natural segue to go back into the public sector after 14 years with The Dispatch Printing Co. and affiliates in the private sector. Coming back into something like this is truly different from being a front-line police officer and police chief, but it's back into the heart of supporting education for the 33,000 law enforcement officers we have here in the state.

What are your priorities for OPOTA?

I don't have specific goals yet because I want to learn as much as I can and meet with staff and our many partners before setting priorities. But my big goal is to continue to maintain and make OPOTA, and all the training we give here, some of the best in the country.

What do you think of the state of police training in Ohio?

It's good, but it can always be expanded. We need to be proactive in identifying what the future issues in policing will be. Some things that happen today might seem like a little blip, but we need to be able to recognize, "You know what, that could become something in the future that we need to be concerned with."

It's important to get input from all the partners around the state, whether it's county sheriffs, State Highway Patrol, local municipal police officers. We need to get their input so that we know what kind of training they may need into the future also.

What would you tell people considering going into law enforcement?

That, despite all of the bad publicity that happens with officers around the country, this is still one of the most noble professions you could do. Certainly, being a law enforcement officer is about catching bad guys, but it's mostly about public service. It's about helping individuals who turn to law enforcement because you represent your community and you're there 24-7. They trust that they can pick up a phone and a police officer will respond to help them in their most critical times. Public service is truly what you're providing in law enforcement.

What do you do when you're not working?

My family loves boating, and we center all of our vacations in the summer. We spend multiple days every year up at Lake Erie and Cedar Point on the waterfront. And then we take our ski boat to the big lakes down in Kentucky for our annual family vacation. So our vacations are all based around water and boating, and that's pretty much my hobby.

Bio box

Hometown: Franklin County

Family: married to Peggy for 37 years; three adult children: Amanda, a nurse practitioner in a trauma fellowship at OhioHealth Grant Medical Center; Chad, a BCI special agent in southern Ohio; and Tyler, a mechanical engineer in Kansas City

Education: FBI National Academy (163rd session); Franklin University, graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in public administration; Police Executive Leadership College; Ohio State Highway Patrol Basic Police Academy (38th session); Columbus State, associate degree in Law Enforcement Technology

Previous roles: The Dispatch Printing Co., vice president of corporate security, 2006-19; Ohio Department of Public Safety Ohio Investigative Unit, executive director, 2005-06; Upper Arlington Division of Police — chief, 1995-2005; sergeant, 1987-95; detective, 1985-87; patrol officer, 1978-85

Continued from Page 1

and referred an additional 217 to services.

That's almost 330 Ohioans combined who have not had control of their lives, their bodies or their time. And the number represents only the tip of the iceberg; Ohio is the fourth-worst state in the nation for human trafficking.

"We've seen that human trafficking doesn't just affect strangers living in some far-off big city," said Matt Hilbert, deputy director of OOCIC. "It is happening in suburbs, towns and rural communities, too, right now. Girls who live in my community are at risk."

"And here's a hard truth," Yost said. "Society is not doing enough to end human trafficking. But that doesn't mean we're not trying like hell to help these modern-day slaves."

The attorney general has created a plan of attack focused on fighting traffickers, decreasing demand and helping victims. Since entering the office on Jan. 14, 2019, Yost has pushed to change state laws, educate law enforcement officers and prosecutors, and make a difference for survivors.

The Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy offers human trafficking-specific courses, and one of Yost's main tools is the new Human Trafficking Initiative, for which he has hired two experts in their fields to work full time to improve the human trafficking response in Ohio.

Jennifer Rausch, legal director of the initiative, and Jomel Aird, director of victim services, have been meeting with coalitions, prosecutors and multidisciplinary groups throughout Ohio.

"We have a lot of different people doing a lot of different things throughout the state," said Rausch, a former leader in the Franklin County Prosecutor's Office. "As we travel, we're working to connect everybody to make sure people aren't reinventing the wheel, to make sure that we can provide resources, too, and bring attention to groups that are doing things really well."

On Jan. 9, various experts will share key information through the attorney general's inaugural Human Trafficking Summit, where the focus will be to "send people home with ideas they can immediately use to improve the response in their own communities," Rausch said.

Professor Richardson will share her story at the summit, and workshops will focus on how to create specialty court dockets, shelters for survivors and multidisciplinary teams that help victims and improve criminal case outcomes.

Aird, a victim advocate who previously worked with the Salvation Army and the Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force, said Yost plans to make the summit a yearly event.

"We want to plant that seed, start that conversation, but make it an ongoing conversation," she said. "The more you know, the more you can do something about trafficking."

Fighting traffickers

"A big myth that we should all recognize — there's not some white van coming to a mall and kidnapping people to force them into trafficking," Aird said. "A lot of traffickers come in as boyfriends or girlfriends. Under that guise, they build rapport, they build trust."

They offer the seeming love and attention the girl or boy, or young woman or young man, doesn't get at home. Or, with labor trafficking, they promise a better job and a better life.

By the time the trafficker flips the script, the victim already feels indebted. Emotional bonds are reinforced by chemicals released by the victim's own body — the same hormones that pull families together when they survive hardship or that bond a mother to her newborn baby, Aird said.

"Today's slave masters don't use iron chains," Yost said. "They use addiction, fraud and psychological manipulation."

For example, seven people were recently indicted in Franklin County after an investigation by the Attorney General's Office, Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force (an OOCIC effort) and Columbus police. The ring was accused of luring women into prostitution by offering drugs, gaining their trust and then intimidating them.

"Those invisible chains hidden in the mind can be harder to break than iron links," Yost said.

Such tactics complicate the job for police and prosecutors trying to bring traffickers to justice.

Rausch and Aird described a recent case that succeeded only through a cooperative effort involving detectives, a court advocate, a victim advocate and prosecutors.

"The people the survivor trusted gradually introduced the other people to her, and by working together, we were able to get a really successful result," Rausch said. "But that's not how a lot of other felony-level cases would look moving through the system."

"That survivor texted me last week," said Aird, reading from her phone: "'Thanks, Jomel, for everything because you are what keeps me going. I don't know where I would be without you guys."

Forming a multidisciplinary team is among the "best practices" shared by Yost's Human Trafficking Initiative.

As a former prosecutor experienced in human trafficking cases, Rausch is compiling strategies for prosecuting trafficking-in-persons charges, educating jurors beginning with voir dire, and building cases that involve survivors who don't present the way jurors probably expect them to.

By the numbers

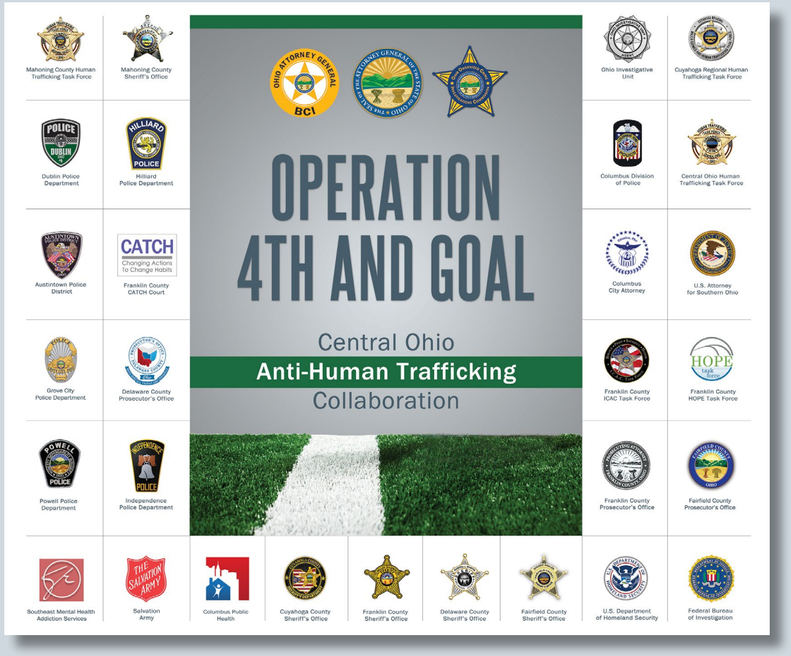
From January through November 2019, OOCIC task forces put up these numbers:

110 Victims rescued

217 Victims referred to services

359 Human trafficking tips received

239 People arrested in related investigations



"Some counties throughout the state are not charging trafficking in persons," Rausch said. "They are more willing to charge compelling prostitution or promoting prostitution."

Yet promoting prostitution is a fourth-degree felony that rarely results in prison time.

"And that's a problem because the pimps are the criminals," Yost said. "The mindset of law enforcement and the courts has turned, to recognize that the pimps' slaves are really victims."

To that end, Yost is pushing changes to Ohio law that would:

- Make it a crime to knowingly receive proceeds from a prostitute, with escalating penalties for each subsequent offense building up to three years in prison.
- Establish an online registry of pimps and human traffickers — those convicted of promoting prostitution — which would be maintained by the Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation.
- Split the offense of "soliciting," which now includes the buying and selling of sex, into two offenses. That way, buyers will face tougher penalties than the victims of human trafficking. "This is long overdue," said Sen. Tim Schaffer, sponsor of the legislation in the Ohio Senate.

"I know when Dave Yost says additional legislation is important for his office to rescue victims of human trafficking and stem the demand in Ohio, he means it," Schaffer said.

In the Ohio House, Reps. Cindy Abrams, Rick Carfagna and Jena Powell have partnered with Yost to sponsor the legislation.

Decreasing demand

"Basic economics works under the premise of supply and demand, and right now we have a demand problem in Ohio," Yost said.

The attorney general has a multipronged effort to cut demand by catching, shaming and punishing people who attempt to buy sex, especially from children, and by making the public aware that prostitutes are often human trafficking victims.

In the first weapon in the arsenal, the Attorney General's Office, including the BCI and OOCIC divisions, partners with dozens of law enforcement agencies for stings. For example:

- In September, in Operation Fourth and Goal, 32 law enforcement agencies and social services groups worked together to arrest 104 people in central Ohio. As a result, 24 men face felony charges for trying to buy sex with children, and 36 others were arrested for soliciting prostitutes.
- In May, the Mahoning Valley Human Trafficking Task Force — an OOCIC operation including officers from the Mahoning County Sheriff's Office and Austintown, Middletown, Warren and Youngstown police departments — partnered with other agencies to arrest 16 men seeking to have sex with children in Canfield. In April and March, the same task force arrested 16 men in Youngtown and Warren.

"We could probably do a sting every night of the week and still arrest this many johns," Yost said.

The johns' names are made public and the stings are proclaimed, in large part, to shame the people who are arrested.

"The buyers of sex are never forced into it and are never victims," Yost said. "They are sating their own appetites at the expense of another human being, predators who take what they want without regard to the costs of their feeding.

"But never underestimate the power of shame as a human motivator," he said.

Taking that a step further, the online, publicly available registry proposed by the attorney general also would include the names and photos of those convicted of buying sex.

"What angers me as much as the act is the anonymity, that you can have these men go dehumanize these women, make it home in time for dinner with their families, and no one is the wiser," Rep. Carfagna said.

Johns would stay on the registry for five years, according to the plan, which must be passed by the legislature and signed by the governor.

Yost also has proposed changes to state law so that people convicted of soliciting prostitutes would be sentenced to "john school," specialized counseling for which they would pay, and up to a $1,500 fine for a first offense; 30 days in jail for a second offense; and six months for a third offense.

"The objective is to target all aspects of prostitution to ensure that we punish those who fuel this humanitarian crisis," Sen. Schaffer said.

To make sure it's impossible for Ohioans not to know that prostitutes are often being forced to sell themselves, the Attorney General's Office has undertaken a public awareness campaign.

Posters have been hung at major events, including Major League Baseball All-Star games, NCAA March Madness games and the Ohio State Fair. Posters are made available by request to any event-holders (email Publications@OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov).

Yost also has made the case that the movie *Pretty Woman* has given society the wrong idea about prostitutes — that they're free spirits making rational decisions about how to earn money.

"A prostitute is more likely a woman whose slave master is waiting in his car outside with a dose of heroin, a baseball bat or a knife," Yost said.

Helping survivors

"The victims of human trafficking might be one of the most difficult populations to build trust with," Yost said. "Folks who have been trafficked usually start out vulnerable to begin with — it's how they get enticed into the life. And the trust they have given away has been abused."

Rausch said studies have shown that, on average, it takes up to 10 contacts from advocates or law enforcement officers before victims of trafficking will accept help.

That means that, even though it can be frustrating that 217 people whom OOCIC task forces believed to be victims refused services in 2019, the contacts made (referrals to services) can still change lives — down the road.

"Victims carry a tremendous amount of guilt," Rausch said, "that they, at some point, said yes to something, whether it was to go with the trafficker in the first place or to be in a relationship."

Overcoming that takes work, as well as time and trust. Relationship building can be difficult for law enforcement agencies with more work than staffing and for advocacy coalitions that serve larger areas than their resources can cover. Also, not enough places in the state have courts with specialty dockets.

The need, clearly, is greater than the resources.

"Is it any wonder that, 154 years after the Civil War, we still haven't eradicated slavery?" Yost said.

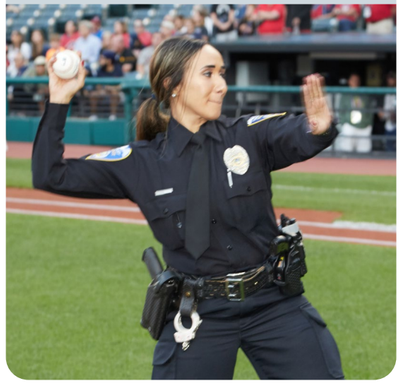
"My team wants to help folks create specialty dockets, develop prosecution strategy and create anti-human trafficking coalitions," he said. "But before we can bring this knowledge to people, they have to recognize that the problem exists.

"They have to buy into the idea that when we work together, we can make a difference in saving our state's most vulnerable citizens."

Sarah Shendy is a veteran Copley police officer, an OPOTA trainer and a Muslim woman who has had such a positive experience in policing that she would recommend the career to anyone, especially minorities.

SARAH SHENDY

POLICE OFFICER, OPOTA TRAINER



"A lot of minorities hesitate on coming into law enforcement because of their differences," said Shendy, 34, whose family moved from Egypt to Ohio when she was 6.

"But I want to highlight how my differences have been an asset to the job. Having that knowledge about your culture, your religion, if you speak a foreign language – those are huge aspects of law enforcement, and why not bring them to the team?

"God created us differently for a reason," she continued, "and we bring such good things to the job when we work together."

In the fall, she was honored as a Hometown Hero by the Cleveland Indians, throwing out an opening pitch at Progressive Field. For the occasion, On the Job caught up with the officer.

How did you get interested in law enforcement?

I get this question all of the time because of my background. I had a professor for a lot of my criminal justice classes at Kent State University, and, after I graduated, he approached me and said, "Hey, Kent State is bringing the police academy back, and it's a big deal."

I totally did not take the conversation seriously and started applying for jobs. I always wanted to work in corrections with kids, like juvenile delinquents. But I couldn't find a job I liked and ended up going to the academy.

It was absolutely God's work. I had always admired and loved and respected the profession, but, growing up, I didn't think that I was good enough to be one of the men and women who protect and serve the country. On top of that, I'm the first and only one in my immediate family who's in law enforcement.

And what has made you stay in law enforcement?

Every single day has been a blessing and an adventure. I fell in love with the camaraderie, the order, the paramilitary lifestyle. Besides people that I love, there's nothing I admire more on this planet than professional law enforcement. What we do as police officers is like no other — what we do is save lives.

On top of that, it's changed me as a person. I keep in touch with a handful of families who I've met under horrific circumstances. And they're always like "thank you, thank you" and I'm like, "No, thank *you*." We want that paycheck every other week so we can pay the bills, but where's our fulfillment? If it wasn't for those victims allowing us to be a part of their lives, that fulfillment wouldn't be there, you know?

What is better than being a part of somebody's growth and recovery? What's better than knowing that person can get up, can be a mom, can be a dad, they can be effective at work and they're going on with life despite the trauma that they faced — because of you.

When there is such a vocal anti-cop sentiment out there, how do you approach teaching your OPOTA class on community relations to officers who might already feel under fire?

This is what I tell other officers: It's happened to me a handful of times, where, on a traffic stop or another call, the person comes at me sideways and is super-disrespectful, uncooperative. I tell myself, "You know what, that person could have had a really bad experience with law enforcement before, and I'm going to be the one to fix it." And I've told people that verbatim. I'm like, "Listen, I don't know what kind of experiences you've had in the past with law enforcement, but I'm not the officer who you dealt with, and I would really appreciate it if you give me a chance to show you that we're not all the same."

How do people respond to that?

They're shocked but extremely receptive. And even before that conversation takes place, I'm very cautious with my body language, with how I exit the cruiser. You know, do I approach them with a smile, do I extend my hand and shake theirs — a lot of it does depend heavily on the dynamics of the call, but I'm always like: "Hi, I'm Officer Sarah. The reason I'm here is this and this. How's your day going?" I humanize myself. I humanize them and the entire situation.

I tell officers all the time, "You make the uniform. The uniform does not make you." We are a walking, talking billboard for our profession and the way we operate in public — are you inviting people to our profession, or are you scaring them away from it?

Sometimes officers come to my class, and they may not think the topic is as important as aptitude or building searches or weapon retention, but I'm like, "Listen, if you don't know how to talk to people in this job, you can get yourself killed or you can set up the next officer that stops that car to get killed because you disrespected someone or because you failed."

So tone matters a great deal.

Exactly. You get out what you put in — in terms of anything in life, including your job. I take my job very seriously, and I'm always learning things, whether it's inside a classroom or outside. I didn't go and get my master's degree because I had a spare 20-grand lying around. I really value education and training, and I think that, as police officers, we lose the right to say no to education, to training, to being mentally and physically fit because other people's lives rely on us.

I try to explain it to my parents because they're like: "Why do you work out so much? Why do you carry off duty?" I tell them there's no decision I make that is just about me. Other people are dependent on me, so if I'm not mentally healthy and I go through a call and I'm preoccupied, I risk my safety and the safety of everybody else on that call. If I'm not physically fit, God forbid we have a school shooting or a fire. I'm not going to go up to someone and be like, "Sorry, I couldn't drag your son, daughter, brother, wife, whatever out of the school because I haven't worked out in months."

I refuse to live with the fact that I could have done something, and it didn't happen because I failed to plan. So that's why I push myself mentally and physically every single day. I try to do something to prepare me for that moment that I hope to God I never have to live through, but in case I do have to react under extreme circumstances, I'm going to be ready.

I mean it when I say that police officers protect and serve — that's what I'm going to do when I'm in uniform. That's what I'm going to do when I'm out of uniform. It's a lifestyle. You become a guardian, and I do feel a sense of responsibility and ownership with everybody around me. Always.

2019 awards honor 'best of the best'

The 2019 Law Enforcement Conference, hosted in the fall by Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, celebrated the great work being done by Ohio peace officers and their partners. ¶ Yost presented the year's Distinguised Law Enforcement Awards at a special ceremony. "These honorees truly represent the best of the best," he said.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Chief Kimberley K. Jacobs (retired), Columbus Division of Police

For almost 40 years with the Columbus Division of Police, Jacobs — the first woman to serve as police chief — focused on excellence to open doors not just for herself but also for future officers from underrepresented populations.

"I don't want to be the first-and-only," Chief Jacobs liked to tell people. "I want to be the first of many."

As Columbus' top officer, Jacobs revamped recruitment strategies; added practices to address officer health and wellness; encouraged officers to spend more time meeting residents; created training programs on constitutional rights and the use of deadly force; and helped equip officers with tourniquets, which saved lives.

CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP AWARD

Yvonne Pointer, activist (above right)

After her 14-year-old daughter, Gloria, was violently killed in 1984, Pointer vowed that her daughter's death would not be in vain. Her advocacy has included visits to schools and prisons to share Gloria's story. She started groups such as Parents Against Child Killing and Positive Plus to support families who experience violence, as well as a 12-year-long midnight basketball league in Cleveland to keep teens off the streets.

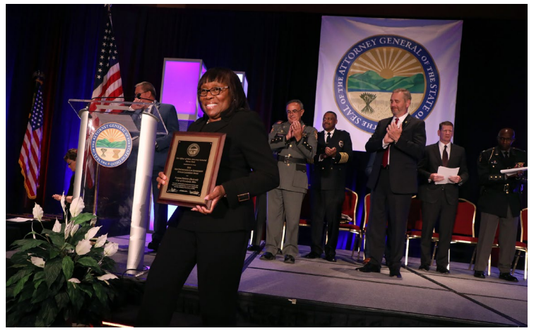
Pointer partners with police and the Ohio Attorney General's Office to comfort crime victims. She also started a scholarship in her daughter's name and established the Gloria Pointer Teen Movement Foundation in Ghana, which has built four schools.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Police Officer Roy W. Tittle, Alliance Police Department

Officer Tittle co-founded an after-school martial-arts program, the 21-year-old Kick Drugs Out of Alliance, that offers kids constructive options, positive role models and a sense of pride — an effort to help them resist drugs and gangs.

Officer Tittle teaches martial arts; has directed the program for 12 years; recruits volunteer instructors; and raises funds to ensure the program remains free for all Alliance City Schools students. No one is turned away.



LEC 2019 LAW ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE

To learn more about award winner Roy Tittle and the martial arts school he runs for kids, visit OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/videos.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING AWARD

Gregory A. Perry, Marion Technical College

As commander of Marion Technical College's Law Enforcement Academy and director of criminal justice and law at the college, Perry helps law enforcement officers become better officers, basic training cadets become strong officers, and people of all kinds become better shooters.

In trainings, the former prosecutor addresses firearms, defensive tactics, court testimony, undercover investigations, active-shooter response, crisis intervention and more.

"He has the patience of a saint," said Deputy Penni Fox of the Morrow County Sheriff's Office, where Perry has provided training since 2015.

MARK LOSEY SERVICE AWARD

Police Officer Kenneth Lawson, Columbus Division of Police

Officer Lawson has been called "a one-man movement to raise awareness and mobilize the community" against human trafficking.

Beginning in 2003, he brought the issue to the attention of the police division and, recognizing the wider lack of awareness, pushed for hospital and law enforcement training, laws to address human trafficking, and engagement from community activists and social services workers. Ninety-five percent of his advocacy took place on his own time, outside of his police duties.

Said state Sen. Teresa Fedor: "It would be impossible to calculate the ripple effect of Officer Lawson's impact on human trafficking in Ohio."

GROUP ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Metropolitan Richland County Drug Enforcement Task Force

With 120 indictments, this task force dismantled a complex group that brought drugs into Mansfield, causing fatal overdoses and shootings.

The partner agencies — the Mansfield, Ashland and Marion police departments; Richland County Sheriff's Office; FBI; and DEA — ID'd the layers of the organization using controlled drug purchases, wire-taps and data analysis of intercepted communications and financial records.

Central Ohio Violent Crime Working Group

This task force shut down the Trevitt and Atcheson Crips, one of the most violent gangs in Columbus' history. Nineteen men were indicted, and nine face the death penalty.

The Columbus police, ATF, FBI and Ohio Adult Parole Authority linked gang members to 380 shots fired, including in murders; connected suspects to crime scenes with data from social media, cellphone towers and license plate readers; and listened to thousands of hours of jail calls.

VALOR AWARD

Troopers James M. Davis, Charles M. Gannon, Jason R. Hutchison and Sgt. David L. Robison, Ohio State Highway Patrol

After a crash on I-75 in Montgomery County, a small bus caught fire. Trapped inside was Cayley Seitz, the pregnant driver, whose leg was pinned.

The troopers kept Seitz safe and calm, fighting back the flames with fire extinguishers.

"I know absolutely if they had not been there, I wouldn't be here," Seitz said.

Now available

Traffic safety grants cover OPOTA tuition

OPOTA has grant money available to reimburse law enforcement officers for tuition to certain traffic safety courses.

Late last year, the academy was awarded $280,000 in grants funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The qualifying courses:

- Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE)
- Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST) Instructor
- Advanced Traffic Collision Investigation (Level II)
- RADAR and LiDAR Operator and RADAR and LiDAR Instructor
- Traffic Collision Investigation (Level I)
- Vehicle Dynamics (Level III)

Registration is available at www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/OPOTAcourses.