

1 RESOLUTION NO. 2017-460

First Reading Passage Requested
(E. Walters)

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4 SPONSORS Ms. Walters, Ms. Shapiro, Mrs. Rodgers, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Schmidt
5 and Council of the Whole

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7
8 DATE October 30, 2017

COMMITTEE Committee of the Whole

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10 **A Resolution expressing support for the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act of 2017 which**
11 **will close an existing loophole in federal law that shields website companies from liability**
12 **for illicit content posted by third-party users, even when such content facilitates criminal**
13 **conduct like illegal sex trafficking, and urging the United States Congress and President**
14 **Donald Trump to support the same, for the Executive and Council, and declaring an**
15 **emergency.**

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17 WHEREAS, from 2010 to 2015, reports of suspected child sex trafficking to the National
18 Center for Missing and Exploited Children increased by more than 800 percent, a spike they
19 found to be “directly correlated to the increased use of the internet to sell children for sex.”; and
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21 WHEREAS, one 2012 analysis by the Advanced Interactive Media Group found that
22 more than 80 percent of all revenue from online commercial sex advertising in the U.S. was
23 generated by the website Backpage; and
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25 WHEREAS, while Backpage’s use as a platform for illegal sex trafficking has been
26 understood for years, a recent report released in January of this year by the Senate Permanent
27 Subcommittee on Investigations found that the company knowingly and actively facilitated
28 criminal sex trafficking, making Backpage far more complicit in these crimes than previously
29 thought; and
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31 WHEREAS, despite these facts, Backpage has escaped legal justice in countless lawsuits
32 brought by sex trafficking victims and prosecutors. The company has been shielded by a 1996
33 law called the Communications Decency Act because courts have ruled that that the law protects
34 companies like Backpage from liability for illicit content that third-party users post on its
35 website, even if it facilitates criminal conduct like illegal sex trafficking; and
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37 WHEREAS, in July 2017, Ohio Senator Rob Portman (R) and 27 other Senators from
38 across political aisles, including fellow Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown (D), introduced the Stop
39 Enabling Sex Traffickers Act; and
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41 WHEREAS, the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act will make three common-sense
42 reforms to the Communications Decency Act. 1) It will allow victims of sex trafficking to seek
43 justice against websites that knowingly facilitate crimes against them by removing the law’s
44 unintended protection for online sex traffickers. 2) It will help law enforcement by allowing the
45 prosecution of websites that knowingly assist, support or facilitate a violation of already existing
46 federal sex trafficking laws and 3) It will enable state law enforcement – not just the Department
47 of Justice – to take legal action against businesses that violate federal sex trafficking laws; and
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49 WHEREAS, this Council finds and determines, after reviewing all pertinent information,
50 that it is necessary and in the best interest of the County of Summit to support the Stop Enabling
51 Sex Traffickers Act of 2017 and urges the United States Congress and President Donald Trump
52 to support the same.

1 RESOLUTION NO. 2017-460

2 PAGE TWO

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4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Summit, State
5 of Ohio, that:

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7 SECTION 1

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9 This Council hereby expresses support for support the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act
10 of 2017 so that companies can be found liable for illicit content that third-party users post on its
11 website such as content related to illegal sex trafficking.

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13 SECTION 2

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15 The Clerk of Council is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this
16 Resolution to the United States Congress and President Donald Trump.

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18 SECTION 3

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20 This Resolution is hereby declared an emergency in the interest of the health, safety, and
21 welfare of the citizens of the County of Summit and for the further reason that it allows this
22 Council to express support for the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act of 2017 and urges United
23 States Congress and President Donald Trump to support the same.

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25 SECTION 4

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27 Provided this Resolution received the affirmative vote of eight members, it shall take
28 effect immediately upon its adoption and approval by the Executive; otherwise, it shall take
29 effect and be in force at the earliest time provided by law.

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31 SECTION 5

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33 It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating
34 to the adoption of this Resolution were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all
35 deliberations of this Council and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action,
36 were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section
37 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

38
39 INTRODUCED October 30, 2017

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41 ADOPTED October 30, 2017

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43 
44 CLERK OF COUNCIL

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47 PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

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49 APPROVED October 31, 2017

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51 
52 EXECUTIVE

ENACTED EFFECTIVE October 31, 2017

Voice Vote: 10-0 YES: Crawford, Dickinson, Feeman, Hamilton, Koehler,
Prentice, Rodgers, Schmidt, Walters, Wilhite
ABSENT: Donofrio