



# SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

## SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR

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### **Akron Woman Pleads Guilty to Human Trafficking Charges**

AKRON, Ohio (Thursday, January 18, 2018) – Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced today that Pearl Coffey, 34, of 1275 Herman Avenue in Akron, pled guilty in connection to human trafficking.

Coffey pled guilty to the following charges:

- Attempted Trafficking in Persons – a felony of the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree
- Compelling Prostitution – a felony of the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree
- Corrupting Another with Drugs – a felony of the 4<sup>th</sup> degree

Coffey admitted to preying on young girls and women, providing them with shelter, drugs and other items in exchange for them prostituting themselves. Coffey and her boyfriend, Darren Townsend, were both charged in the case. Coffey has agreed to testify against Townsend at trial. Townsend is scheduled to go on trial February 5, 2018 in front of Summit County Common Pleas Court Judge Amy Corrigan Jones. Judge Corrigan Jones is scheduled to sentence Coffey on Tuesday February 27, 2018 at 9am.

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The Summit County Prosecutor's Office worked with the Independence Police Department as well as other detectives with the Cuyahoga County Regional Human Trafficking Task Force, which is part of Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine's Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission.

Coffey and Townsend are the first people in Summit County charged with "Trafficking in Persons". "Trafficking in Persons" first became a chargeable offense in Ohio in 2011. Since then, the majority of human trafficking cases in Ohio were handled at the federal level. Throughout Ohio's 88 counties, there have been less than two dozen "trafficking in persons" trials since 2011.