



# SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

## SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR

For Immediate Release:  
CONTACT: James Pollack  
Phone: (330) 604-2739  
[pollack@prosecutor.summitoh.net](mailto:pollack@prosecutor.summitoh.net)  
Twitter: @ProsecutorWalsh  
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### **Akron Couple Indicted on Human Trafficking Charges**

*First Time "Trafficking in Persons" Charge Has Been Used in Summit County*

AKRON, Ohio (Friday, September 22, 2017) – Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced today that a Summit County grand jury has indicted Darren Townsend, 37, of 812 Nome Avenue in Akron, and Pearl Coffey, 34, of 1275 Herman Avenue in Akron, on charges of Human Trafficking.

The grand jury indicted both on the following charges:

- 2 Counts of Trafficking in Persons – felonies of the 1<sup>st</sup> degree
- 1 Count of Compelling Prostitution – a felony of the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree
- 2 Counts of Compelling Prostitution – felonies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree
- 3 Counts of Compelling Prostitution – felonies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree
- 3 Counts of Promoting Prostitution – felonies of the 4<sup>th</sup> degree

Darren Townsend was also charged with Corrupting Another with Drugs – a felony of the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree.

Pearl Coffey is also charged with Corrupting Another with Drugs, a felony of the 4<sup>th</sup> degree, and Possession of Marijuana – a felony of the 5<sup>th</sup> degree.

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.

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Both Townsend and Coffey are scheduled to be arraigned Monday, September 25, 2017 at 11am in Judge Amy Corrigan-Jones courtroom.

“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.