



## **Public Testimony on H.B. 64: Main Operating Budget for FY 2016-2017**

### **Ohio House Finance Committee**

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Chair Smith, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Driehaus, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 64. As Ohio's statewide coalition, the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence advocates for comprehensive responses and rape crisis services for survivors and empowers communities to prevent sexual violence.

Last week I provided testimony in the Finance Subcommittee on Transportation on the Rape Crisis Fund. Initially I was surprised to learn that this budget item was in that committee, but it was actually quite fitting. Many victims of sexual violence in Ohio who reside in counties without a rape crisis center have to travel upwards of two hours to get to the nearest center or even the closest hospital with a trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner. For many victims, it means they never make that journey at all and suffer in silence, dealing with the pain on their own; sometimes self-medicating; sometimes repeatedly missing work or dropping out of school entirely; sometimes having multiple visits to healthcare facilities over their lifespan to deal with chronic health issues, all brought on by the victimization of rape.

Before I go into detail about our request for improving statewide support to address sexual violence, I first need to highlight the incredible progress we have made in Ohio. Within the past two years, Ohio has experienced tremendous progress in efforts to more effectively address sexual violence. Following high-profile sexual assault cases in Steubenville and Cleveland, communities across the state endeavored to do more to prevent sexual violence and support survivors. Thanks to first-ever dedicated funding of \$1 million per fiscal year for rape crisis programs in the state budget in FY2014-FY2015, in the first year of funding:

- 12 programs were able to sustain positions that would otherwise have been eliminated,
- 10 programs were able to create new positions to meet the critical need in their communities, and
- 4 programs expanded services into counties that previously had none.

With approximately 743,000 adult women living in Ohio who are survivors of rape,<sup>1</sup> and one in four girls and one in six boys being sexually abused before they turn 18 years old<sup>2</sup>:

- Two years ago Ohio had just 27 rape crisis centers providing services in 37 of the state's 88 counties.<sup>3</sup>
- As of today, there are now 30 rape crisis centers providing services in 53 counties.

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<sup>1</sup> *National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey*. (2010). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>2</sup> Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., Lewis, I.A., & Smith, C. (1990). Sexual abuse in a national survey of adult men and women: Prevalence, characteristics and risk factors. *Child Abuse & Neglect* 14, 19-28. Doi:10.1016/0145-2134(90)90077-7

<sup>3</sup> Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (2013). *Core Standards for Rape Crisis Programs in Ohio*. Retrieved from: <http://www.oaesv.org/ohio-core-rape-crisis-standards-2013/>.

While significant gaps remain in 40% of Ohio counties without comprehensive rape crisis services, dedicated funding for rape crisis services resulted in more than 14,000 Ohioans receiving critical services that they would not have otherwise. *Note that attached to this testimony you have a Year 1 Summary of the Rape Crisis Fund.*

Our plan for Ohio is to continue expanding the availability of rape crisis services in counties without such services, while sustaining and growing existing services. Due to the success of this funding and expansion of services:

- In Year 1 of state funding rape crisis centers were awarded \$36,789
- In Year 2, three additional programs became eligible, thus decreasing all rape crisis center awards to \$31,666
- In anticipation of Year 3, we project that up to five additional programs could be eligible for this funding, resulting in all rape crisis centers receiving another decrease, at approximately \$26,718.

With the Rape Crisis Fund remaining level funded at \$1 million per year in HB 64, rape crisis centers will receive up to \$10,000 less in Year 3 than funds granted in Year 1. This would contribute to a reduction in the workforce at rape crisis centers and an inability to sustain positions that had been created, sustained or made full-time with benefits, as a result of this funding.

This reduction in funding would come at a time when the attention on sexual violence has never been greater in our state or across the U.S., which makes now a critical time to invest in preventing sexual violence and supporting survivors.

As rape crisis centers have provided increased services, the Ohio Attorney General's Sexual Assault Kit-Testing Initiative made significant progress in testing backlogged rape kits, resulting in over 6,500 kits being tested and more than 259 defendants being indicted in Cuyahoga County alone. To prevent a similar backlog of kits in the future, [Senate Bill 316](#), legislation requiring law enforcement agencies in Ohio to submit all rape kits in a timely fashion, was signed into law in December 2014. Meanwhile, recently passed federal legislation from the Campus SaVE Act paved the way for improving the way sexual violence is addressed on college campuses nationwide.

While all of these recent developments have been positive, they have exposed a need for more intensive training, technical assistance, and advocacy statewide to address the increased demand for services. As large numbers of rape kits are being tested and offenders are being identified, two needs have emerged: 1) law enforcement, prosecutors, and advocates need additional training and technical assistance in addressing the needs of survivors whose cases were not handled sensitively or in a timely manner, and 2) advocates are needed to ensure that victims have access to justice.

Data from the Office of Criminal Justice Services indicates that there were only 3,467 reports of rape to Ohio law enforcement agencies in 2011 and only 3,625 reports in 2012. These numbers are indicative of the few and severely underfunded services we had at that time. Significantly more rapes were and continue to occur in our state, yet until we adequately fund these services we will see serial offenders of these crimes commit repeated offenses, with victims in many counties still lacking rape crisis services for support.

The presence (or absence) of a rape crisis advocate can have a significant impact on the recovery of survivors and the outcomes of their cases. Research has shown that sexual assault survivors who have the assistance of an advocate are significantly more likely to have police reports taken and less likely to be treated negatively by police or experience distress from their interactions with law enforcement. Additionally, survivors who have access to an advocate while in hospital emergency departments are more likely to receive comprehensive medical services.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, as campuses struggle to meet the requirements under the Campus SaVE Act, the need has emerged for training about sexual violence and the policies that address it on campus, as well as greater collaboration between campuses and rape crisis centers. The advocacy to improve campus sexual violence response under Title IX has shed light on the need to improve the way K-12 settings, and particularly high schools, respond to sexual violence, which can be found in a March 5, 2015 article from the U.S. News & World Report, [\*High Schools and Middle Schools Are Failing Victims of Sexual Assault\*](#).

By partnering with local rape crisis centers, Ohio institutions can achieve appropriate training, prevention programs and support services at lower costs while establishing valuable sustainable relationships that benefit the student body by enhancing accessibility to comprehensive supportive services. **Unfortunately, 31% of Ohio’s campuses are located in counties without a local rape crisis center. Funding is needed to close this gap so that satellite services can grow into these counties.** The University of Akron has already partnered with its local Rape Crisis Center to help improve accessibility of services to student survivors, and we look forward to other institutions forging such partnerships, with funding.

The impact of the current Rape Crisis Fund has reached across the state. In Columbus, the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio (SARNCO) shared that:

*“One of the most pressing needs in our community is for increasing availability of Sexual Assault Advocates and Forensic Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE). The quick response from trained SANEs and Advocates is proven to increase survivor participation in the criminal justice process. Many counties across Ohio have gone without support services for victims of sexual violence. As a result of this funding, more Ohioans have a place to go, where they can be supported and believed, and heal from the trauma of these crimes. Due to the Rape Crisis Fund, SARNCO increased the number of trained responders to the Sexual Assault Response Team.*

*In Franklin County there are 12 emergency departments which are part of 3 healthcare systems serving approximately 500 adult survivors of sexual violence each year. SARNCO is part of one of these healthcare systems and is contracted with the other 2 in order for our Sexual Assault Advocates to provide services in all 12 emergency departments...The Rape Crisis Fund created 7 new Advocate Contractor positions which served an additional 88 survivors seeking support in the emergency departments and via the 24-Hour Rape Helpline. Without these positions, many of these survivors would have had delayed service, or no service at all.”*

The Cleveland Rape Crisis Center shared that:

*“During the grant period CRCC’s prevention team was able to accomplish, with the support of this funding, several exciting programs with particularly “at risk” audiences, but one*

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<sup>4</sup> Campbell, Rebecca (2006). *Rape Survivors’ Experiences with the Medical and Legal Systems: Do Rape Victim Advocates Make a Difference?* Violence Against Women, Vol.12, No. 1, published by Sage Publications, retrieved from [http://psychology.msu.edu/vaw/core\\_faculty/rebecca\\_campbell/Articles/Campbell%20\(2005\).pdf](http://psychology.msu.edu/vaw/core_faculty/rebecca_campbell/Articles/Campbell%20(2005).pdf)

*success stands out from the rest. In early September, CRCC's prevention team presented an engaging, interactive session with over 350 student athletes at Cleveland State University, across all sports. By focusing on how to become effective bystanders and leaders to prevent sexual assault, the presenters were able to decrease defensiveness to the issue while promoting healthier behaviors.*

*Most importantly, the team knows that this approach is effective. The percentage of individuals who thought "they could make a difference to reduce sexual violence on [their] campus" at the onset of the program was 37%. At the end of the program, 85% of participants stated that they "definitely" or "probably" would do something to intervene and interrupt a potential sexual assault. This is a strong indication that the approach shows promise in creating a safer community."*

In Portage County, Townhall II shared:

*"The Rape Crisis Fund has helped immensely by allowing us to hire another person, but three full-time people (only two before this funding) are not enough for 24 hour services. We are providing prevention and outreach services. We reach many of the schools in our county, but due to lack of funding we can't reach them all. The Rape Crisis Fund has allowed us to get up to where necessity required, but we are still not where ideally we should be."*

And in Cincinnati, Women Helping Women shared that:

*"The Rape Crisis Funding enabled the agency to retain and expand a prevention position (adding a .5 FTE), expand a crisis intervention position (adding a .5 FTE), replace the agency's 16+ year-old client database software to better track and report on services and produce outreach brochures to raise awareness of community services.*

*And the support came just at the right time. During the most recent grant year, we experienced significant increases in demand for sexual assault crisis intervention services including a 30% increase in sexual assault related hotline calls and a 33% increase in sexual assault hospital accompaniment services, and our prevention position reached 28% more individuals. Without this funding, we would have been unable to meet the increasing demand for services in our community and many individuals could have gone unserved."*

We have much work ahead of us, to ensure that regardless of which county you reside in in Ohio, you should have access to comprehensive rape crisis services. Now is a critical time to increase the Rape Crisis Fund. While federal grants fluctuate from year to year, with countless restrictions on federal funding on essential costs that non-profits need just to keep their doors open; and grants like VOCA not funding prevention and requiring a 25% match just to receive the other 75% of funds, it's incredible to me that Ohio's rape crisis centers have remained open over the years on such shoe-string budgets.

The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence, on behalf of Ohio's rape crisis centers, is requesting an increased appropriation of \$2 million per fiscal year in FY 2016-FY2017 to achieve the following:

- Increase prevention and supportive services in current counties with rape crisis centers

- Expand funding into more counties without services
- Increase funding to population centers with a higher number of survivors and individuals to benefit from prevention services
- Increase partnerships with college campuses to prevent sexual violence

In closing, I would like to share with you three model states for addressing sexual violence:

- Kentucky, with a much smaller population than Ohio, appropriates \$3.6 million/year
- Texas appropriates \$6.5 million/year
- Pennsylvania appropriates \$8.7 million/year

We are incredibly thankful for the Rape Crisis Fund. It has literally kept the doors open of some of Ohio's rape crisis centers and provided such critical funding to programs to support survivors in their communities and to increase prevention to stop rape from happening in the first place.

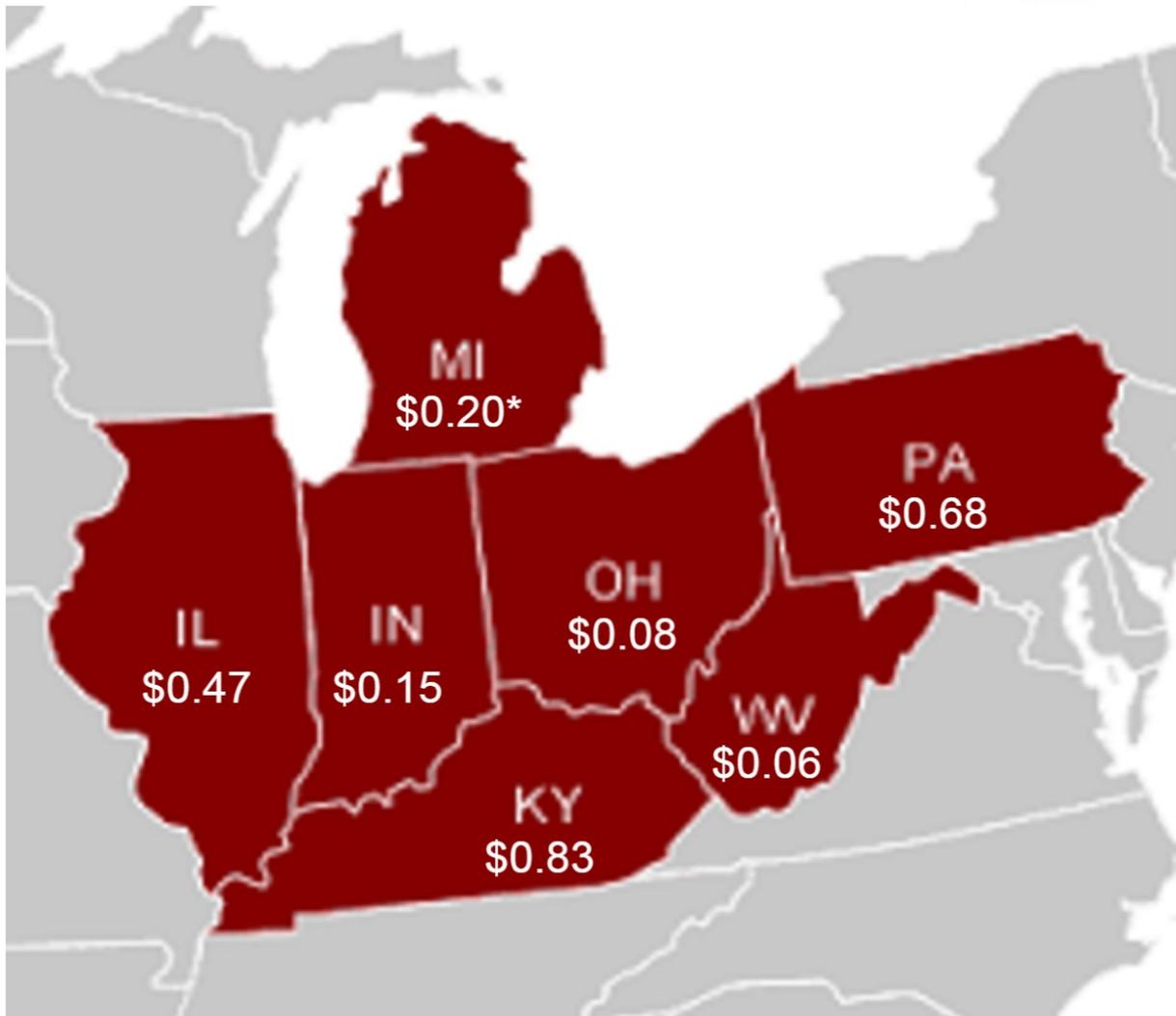
Thank you for your support of the Rape Crisis Fund, and I am available for questions.



# Investing in Rape Crisis Services

Per capita spending on rape crisis services:  
A comparison between Ohio and  
surrounding states

March 2015



\*No funding for direct services; \$0.20 per capita for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner fund

Sources:

United States Census Bureau  
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Michigan Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence  
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape  
West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information Services  
Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs



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## RAPE CRISIS FUND IN OHIO: SUMMARY OF IMPACT FOR YEAR 1

### By the Numbers

Twenty-five programs in Ohio received funding through the first year of State Rape Crisis Fund grant administered from February through September 2014. In less than one year's time, the value of this funding has been significant – both in terms of the direct impact on individuals and communities and on the ability of rape crisis programs to survive and to thrive.

As a result of the State Rape Crisis Fund, over **14,780** Ohioans received critical services that they would not have otherwise:

- 5,672 child and adult survivors of sexual violence received crisis and support services
- 9,108 individuals received programming related to the prevention of sexual violence
- Four rape crisis programs expanded services to counties that did not previously have services available

As a result of the State Rape Crisis Fund, invaluable expertise in sexual violence prevention and response was sustained and expanded in Ohio, contributing to a robust workforce:

- 16 FTE employees were created or sustained
- 12 rape crisis programs were able to sustain positions that would otherwise have been eliminated
- 10 rape crisis programs were able to create new positions to meet critical needs in their communities

### How Funding was Utilized

The flexibility of the State Rape Crisis Fund has enabled rape crisis programs in Ohio to directly address critical needs, harnessing the expertise of individual programs in prioritizing unmet needs in their own communities and developing effective strategies to meet those needs.

Common themes for the utilization of the State Rape Crisis Fund:

- **Promptly Meeting the Needs of All Survivors:** Many rape crisis programs are now able to provide a more immediate response to the crisis needs of survivors. This has been accomplished by hiring advocates to focus exclusively on crisis services, as well as hiring volunteer coordinators to train and supervise volunteers to be immediately available for crisis calls around the clock.
- **Prioritizing Prevention:** Implementing effective primary prevention strategies is the only way to directly impact the crime of sexual violence *before it occurs*. Numerous rape crisis programs, whose funding for prevention education had been reduced or eliminated entirely, were able to reestablish prevention programming in schools and within their communities.
- **Partnering with Campuses:** Several rape crisis programs are now able to coordinate services with local colleges and universities, in accordance with federal recommendations in addressing campus sexual assault. This has resulted in more campus survivors seeking crisis services and receiving prevention programming.

Individual Statements of Impact:

- *“Survivors within the community have expressed how thankful they are that a Rape Crisis Center exists in Southeast OH and this is possible because of this funding.” - Ohio University Survivor Outreach Program*
- *“Reaching more people, preventing more abuse was made possible by this critical funding stream.” – Women Helping Women*
- *“We were able to recognize the unique needs of sexual assault survivors and created a position that provided intensive case management for survivors of sexual violence and human trafficking...We will travel to the survivor and some of them live at least 2 hours or more away from our office.” – Rape Crisis of Crime Victim Services*

### **The Need for Additional Funding**

While current State Rape Crisis Funding has been invaluable in meeting critical needs within rape crisis programs and their communities, the need for additional funding is critical. In order to sustain services long-term and build partnerships that provide seamless service delivery for survivors, rape crisis programs need additional resources to meet the ongoing need in their communities.

Commonly identified ongoing needs:

- **Developing and expanding innovative outreach and prevention strategies:** Prevention services are vitally important. Many programs identified the need to move beyond traditional outreach activities and prevention programming, to expand their reach to underserved survivors and groups within their communities.
- **Expanding clinical services for survivors:** Many programs identified the need to expand clinical mental health counseling and support group services for survivors who need more intensive support in their recovery.
- **Improving program infrastructure to enhance service delivery:** Many programs identified the need to update their facilities and equipment in order to operate more efficiently, as well as to expand their volunteer programs to ensure seamless service delivery and reduce after-hours strain on paid staff.
- **Establishing and expanding diverse partnerships:** Programs have identified ongoing needs for increased staffing to identify, establish, and/or build partnerships with a diverse range of professionals, networks, and organizations within their communities which could enhance service delivery.

Individual Statements of Need:

- *“More resources would allow us to expand our work with adults and go beyond the established network of middle schools, high schools, community centers and college campuses to new territory where the message of prevention is muffled or severely muted. We must de-mystify the conversation to empower healthy preventative measures.” – Cleveland Rape Crisis Center (CRCC)*
- *“Additional funding would allow us to provide increased training to law enforcement, schools and hospitals. It would allow us to expand our bystander intervention programs. We could purchase more materials for survivors, as well as promote awareness of services to survivors through the media.” – Tri-County Help Center*
- *“We would also like to support a bilingual Latina Outreach Advocate for our crisis intervention services. Clients identifying as Hispanic have more than tripled since 2011 – up 125% from 2012 to 2013 alone.” – Women Helping Women*
- *“We are striving to strengthen our outreach, mental health services, system coordination and professional training. This can only be done with more resources.” – CRCC & Lake County Prosecutor’s Office*
- *“Hire volunteer supervisors in the adjacent counties to recruit, train and supervise a volunteer base to provide rape crisis services where there are none.” – SAAFE Center*

### **Ohio Rape Crisis Fund**

- Increased dollars to the Rape Crisis Fund would:
  - Create more Ohio jobs
  - Increase availability of counseling and support groups provided to survivors
  - Provide prevention programming and outreach services to more youth
  - Support program expansion into counties without rape crisis services
  - Equip rape crisis programs with one statewide staff attorney to help survivors navigate civil legal systems
  - Train more first responders, including law enforcement and hospitals
  - Designate a fund to pay for survivor’s ancillary medical costs associated with having a sexual assault forensic evidence collection kit taken at the hospital