



State Representative Mike Duffey, 21st District

Sponsor Testimony – Rep. Duffey
HB 359 (Duffey, Gonzales) – Address Confidentiality Program

Ohio Senate –State and Local Government Committee – February 23, 2016

Chairman LaRose, Vice Chair Hottinger, Ranking Member Thomas, members of the State and Local Government committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 359, legislation to establish an Address Confidentiality Program in Ohio for victims of domestic violence, stalking, human trafficking, rape and sexual assault.

The state of Ohio currently has no method of concealing the address of victims of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault in public records, meaning those who fear being stalked must make a choice between anonymity and, for example, the right to register to vote.

HB 359 creates an Address Confidentiality Program for Ohio – joining programs that already exist in at least 36 other states – housed at the Ohio Secretary of State’s office to provide a PO Box address and unique ACP number for each ACP participant. In doing so, the ability of victims to participate in various government registrations is restored without fear of disclosing a true address. Ohio’s program is modeled directly off other states’ successful programs.

This bill was brought to my attention by a female resident of Ohio who expressed concern that, if she were to attempt to pursue voting in Ohio, she would be forced to choose between registering to vote and her ability to remain hidden from an abusive ex-spouse.

Upon introduction of this bill and resulting press coverage, the importance of this legislation was further illustrated when we were approached by Ms. Marcia Eakin, a domestic violence survivor from Canton who recounted her horrific real life experience in 2009. It seems her ex-husband had been stalking her, using public records, and one night he decided to do something terrible – he took their young children, whom he had custody of that night, and he stabbed them to death to save them from a “broken home”, then to hurt Ms. Eakin further, he drove to her mother’s house and killed her, before attempting to maim Ms. Eakin and kill her boyfriend. He is now exhausting his appeals on Ohio’s death row. Ms. Eakin testified in the House and her story has had a profound affect on every legislator with whom I have shared the story.

House Bill 359 passed unanimously out of the House on January 27th. Thank you, Chairman LaRose, and members of the committee. Following her testimony, Rep. Gonzales and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have for us.

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