

Thank you Chairman Manning, Vice-Chair Rezabek and Ranking Member Johnson and members of the Criminal Justice Committee for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 30. This bill is being designated Destiny's Law, named in honor of Destiny Shepard. Destiny was just a year old when she was violently shaken and thrown against a wall. As a result, she suffered permanent brain injuries. This bill is being introduced at the request of Destiny's mother, Randi Shepard, as well as our county prosecutor Andy Wilson. House Bill 30 has a companion bill being sponsored by Senator Hackett in the upper chamber.

It was 11 years ago that Randi Shepard went to a local store to get milk for her daughter, and when she returned home, her house was surrounded by police and emergency vehicles. Destiny was taken to Dayton Children's Medical Center where Randi learned that her daughter had suffered skull fractures and serious brain injuries caused by a boyfriend violently shaking the child and throwing her against a wall. While Destiny survived and is now 12 years old - the child who once loved to run and play now struggles daily with permanent disabling brain injuries.

Under current law, Destiny's assailant could only be sentenced for up to eight years for felonious assault. House Bill 30 will require the court to impose an additional mandatory prison term of 3 to 8 years if an individual is convicted of or pleads guilty to a felony offense of violence to someone under the age of six years old. The bill also carries the specification that the victim suffered permanent disabling harm. House Bill 30 and Senate Bill 20 define permanent disabling harm as serious physical harm that results in permanent injury to the intellectual, physical or sensory functions and that permanently and substantially impairs a person's ability to meet the ordinary demands of life.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Criminal Justice Committee, Destiny's assailant was convicted and sentenced but has since been released from prison while Destiny continues to serve a life sentence due to her permanent brain injuries. He is free while Randi Shepard will spend the rest of her life providing daily care for Destiny. While we can often disagree on many issues in the Ohio General Assembly, one thing I believe we can all agree on is that we must protect the children of Ohio. As you know, these crimes often involve very young and vulnerable victims who are unable to protect themselves. Along with Senator Hackett, it is my hope that with this increased penalty - we can prevent *and help deter* another tragic case like Destiny's.

Chairman Manning, Vice-Chair Rezabek, Ranking Member Johnson and members of the Criminal Justice Committee thank you for allowing me to bring House Bill 30 before you. I would be happy to attempt to answer any questions the committee may have at this time.