

Written Testimony for Proponent Hearing in Support of H.B. 109

Dear Chairman Manning, Vice Chairman Rezabek, Ranking Member Johnson and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee,

As a career professional in the area of developmental disability and the parent of Anne, our 19 year old daughter with Down syndrome, I am familiar with many of the unique concerns and needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. I therefore submit the following written testimony in support of Ohio House Bill 109 which acknowledges these concerns and potential vulnerabilities by imposing enhanced penalties for crimes committed against a victim with a disability.

Research has found that people with intellectual or developmental disabilities are victimized by crime at much higher rates than the rest of the population, and they are targeted specifically because of their disabilities. The violent victimization rate against persons with disabilities (30.7 per 1,000) was more than twice the rate for persons without disabilities (12.8 per 1,000) in 2010-14 according to data from the [National Crime Victim Survey](#). People with cognitive disabilities, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, face the highest risk of victimization. Specifically, persons with cognitive disabilities had the highest rates of total violent crime (56.6 per 1,000), serious violent crime (24.0 per 1,000), and simple assault (32.6 per 1,000) among the disability types measured. These disparities were consistent across each racial and ethnic group measured. The full report (*Crime Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009-2014-Statistical Tables*, NCJ 250200), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found at www.bjs.gov.

Individuals with cognitive disabilities belong alongside their friends, neighbors and co-workers in our communities. Full inclusion is the goal of many people with disabilities and their family members and it's certainly our goal for Anne. Her welcoming, friendly and accepting personality is what draws people to her. Yet that is also what makes her vulnerable to those who may seek to take advantage of her or worse, to do her real harm.

Anne goes out into the community daily. She attends a full-time work-study program, works 12 hours a week at Kroger, volunteers in Over the Rhine and enjoys movies, restaurants and other social activities with her friends. Full inclusion is her right and her involvement benefits our whole community. While I hope crime will never touch her, the sobering reality of her life is that she may need the protections and benefits that H.B. 109 provides. Please support these enhanced penalties for the benefit of all of our communities, to help keep Anne and others engaged, involved and fully included with the protections they may need.

Respectfully submitted,

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