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State Senator Jay Hottinger
Senate Bill 171 Sponsor Testimony
House Criminal Justice Committee
November 13, 2018

Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, I am here to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 171.

This needed legislation would make changes to the penalties associated with violating a protection order by implementing stiffer penalties associated with the violation of our domestic violence statute. Under current law, an individual who violates a protection order is able to continue menacing the victim who sought the order with little deterrent because the offender is likely to be only given a misdemeanor for the violation. This lack of deterrent is detrimental to the person who sought the protection order. When I met with the Licking County Prosecutor, Former Representative Billy Hayes, and the Newark Chief of Police, they both cited numerous examples of offenders who continue to violate a protection order because they know there is no meaningful jail time for the violation.

Senate Bill 171 addresses this problem in current law by applying Ohio's current domestic violence penalties to the violation of a protection order. Under Senate Bill 171, the new penalty for a violation of a protection order would be a felony of the fourth degree.

Without the added penalty, I fear that victims of abuse will face continued threats from people the law ought to protect them from.

For these reasons, I urge your favorable consideration on Senate Bill 171. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.