

# **SHEILA VACULIK**

*Sierah's Law – Senate Bill 231*

*Proponent Testimony*

## **House Criminal Justice Committee**

Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak in front of you today.

My daughter Sierah was a victim of a violent offense. Sierah was entering her junior year at the University of Toledo, was on the Dean's list every year and on her way to graduate with honors. She was inducted into the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and an active member of Alpha Kappa Psi professional business fraternity.

Apart from being a full-time student she also volunteered her time at the YMCA Big Brother Big Sister program. Sierah had recently accepted an internship with Ice industries for the summer and she was looking forward to studying abroad in the fall. She was great at multi-tasking and planning; actually, she was in the process of planning our next family movie night. The last voice message I have is her trying to get a head count for The Secret Life of Pet's movie.

The whole family, all thirteen of us, were eager for Wednesday night to come. Wednesday night came, but it played out like a chapter in a Stephen King novel, not at all how we thought we would be spending it as a family. Instead of watching a movie, we watched road closed signs go up, bright yellow caution tape not allowing us to enter and police car after police car lined the streets with search parties going in and out of the cornfields. We watched all of this from my parent's porch wondering how this happened so close to our home.

Tuesday, July 19 2016 started like any other day. Sierah and I talked in the morning. I told her that her passport had come in and I would stop after work to give it to her. Later that day I stopped into my parents on my way home to drop off Sierah's passport and she was getting ready to take a bike ride to her boyfriend Josh's. We talked for a little bit and then Sierah left for Josh's house. That would be the last time that I would see or talk to my oldest daughter.

What followed hours later is a parent's worst nightmare. Roughly around 10:00 pm I received a phone call from Josh asking if Sierah was at our house because she was not answering her phone. It was then that we discovered her bike was not in the barn. Panic and fear hit me like someone sucked all of the air out of my lungs. I could not breathe and I wanted to get sick. As Sierah's mother I knew there was something seriously wrong and time was of the essence.

We called 911 and reported her missing, and began driving looking for her. Messages were put out on Facebook and other social media sites. Within hours the K-9 unit was out and her bike was found, soon the quiet of the night filled with the sound of Promedica's Air Mobile and the

spotlight lit up the sky. The sex offender registry that was put into place by legislators worked just like it was meant to that night. Law enforcement had contact with the offenders in our area, within hours after Sierah went missing, this was critical since Toledo has a history of sex trafficking. But unfortunately, the man responsible was not on any list or registry.

Sierah's attacker is no stranger to law enforcement. On July 4<sup>th</sup> 1990, in an extremely similar incident, a bicyclist was riding on a country road when Mr. Worley violently assaulted her. He took an alford plea in Lucas County Common Pleas court and was sentenced 5-10 years, of which he only served 3 years. In October 2000, he was back in jail for growing marijuana and served almost 2 years of the 3-year sentence he was given.

That early Wednesday morning in 2016 when law enforcement looked up the list of sexual offenders in our area, they could have also had a database of violent offenders that could have been questioned. Would my daughter have been found Wednesday alive instead of Friday in a grave 7 miles from our home?

I respectfully ask your consideration be given to a violent offender database for the State of Ohio. These violent offenders are being released and integrated back into society. Sierah's Law will not prevent violent crimes from occurring but knowledge is power and when time is of the essence, knowing where a previous violent offender resides can possibly make a difference. We can equip law enforcement with the tools they need to identify predators sooner when a crisis occurs.

Respectfully,

Sheila Vaculik