

Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee  
Tuesday, March 28, 2017  
Proponent Testimony  
House Bill 1

Good morning, Committee Chair Bacon, Vice Chair Dolan, Ranking Minority Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

My name is Phyllis Carlson-Riehm and I represent ACTION OHIO Coalition For Battered Women, a statewide domestic violence coalition. Our work includes 1) Responding to individual victims of violence seeking advocacy, referrals and resources, 2) Providing training opportunities for professionals serving victims and their children, and 3) Educating the public about various forms of violence that impact many families in our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony in support of House Bill 1, sponsored by Representatives Emilia Sykes and Representative Nathan Manning. This bill will update Ohio's laws and address the need for protection orders for victims of dating violence.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, relationship violence is most apt to occur to victims between ages 18 to 24. Younger people with less life experience may not recognize red flags signaling controlling or abusive behavior. Also, abusers early in a relationship may not reveal their abusive, demanding tendencies.

Research on today's social norms indicates that the average age for marriage has increased. Young adults often delay marriage to complete their education or job training and to begin a career path that will enable financial independence. As a result, many young couples expect to have longer dating relationships before marriage.

Our society also has a high rate of divorce, leading to later-in-life dating relationships prior to a second or third marriage. It is also not uncommon for individuals in older generations to resume dating after the death of a spouse. Consequently, individuals in many age groups could experience dating violence. For this reason, the enactment of House Bill 1 is reasonable and necessary and could benefit victims of dating violence of various ages.

**It's significant to note that 48.6% of women killed by intimate partners were killed by dating partners.** It is also worthy to note that women in the U.S. are 11 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than in other high-income nations. (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence) It takes little effort to kill with a gun – pulling the trigger does not require a great deal of thought, especially about consequences.

When Classie Mixon, a young woman from Upstate New York, moved to Ohio and took a job at the Franklin Medical Center (a medical treatment prison on Harmon Ave.), she was seeking to improve her career in the criminal justice system and build a brighter

future. But on February 10, police were called to her home on Silver Oak Drive in Columbus, in response to a call about a domestic dispute. After officers were convinced that Classie and her boyfriend Keith Marshall were going to resolve their differences, they left the scene. Officers probably were not aware that Marshall had a gun. About an hour after the police departed, Marshall shot his 32-year old girlfriend multiple times, killing her in her home.

Soon after Marshall fled the scene in his pickup truck, the police were in pursuit. When Marshall stopped on Lowridge Drive and got out of his truck, police fired shots at him but missed. (Marshall may have been playing “suicide by cop.”) Then Marshall shot himself. He was taken to Grant Medical Center in critical condition and later died from his wounds.

**House Bill 1 will authorize the court to issue a civil dating violence protection order for a victim experiencing relationship violence when Ohio’s current legal provisions defining a domestic violence (DV) relationship do not apply.**

**House Bill 1 will require law enforcement agencies to maintain an index of dating violence protection orders and consent agreements and charge violations when they occur.**

**House Bill 1 will also pave the way for dating violence victims to have the option of seeking and obtaining safety at one of Ohio’s domestic violence shelters.**

**Maybe if House Bill 1 had been enacted into Ohio law prior to February 10, Classie Mixon and Keith Marshall would both be alive today. In any case, I do believe that the enactment of House Bill 1 could save the lives of some dating violence victims in the future.**

**Please support passage of House Bill 1. Thanks for your consideration.**

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