

# WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: May 27, 2020

Name: Susan Nixon Stoughton

Are you representing: Yourself \_\_\_\_\_ Organization

Organization (If Applicable): The Lighthouse, Inc.

Position/Title: Executive Director

Address: P.O. Box 215, 222 N. Broad Street

City: Lancaster State: Ohio Zip: 43130

Best Contact Telephone: 740-503-2292 Email: [snixon-stoughton@lancasterlh.org](mailto:snixon-stoughton@lancasterlh.org)

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): 429

Specific Issue: Safe at Home Program

Are you testifying as a: Proponent  Opponent \_\_\_\_\_ Interested Party \_\_\_\_\_

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

My name is Susan Nixon Stoughton, I am the Director of The Lighthouse, Inc. Our shelter is located in Lancaster, Ohio and has a long history serving victims of domestic violence since 1981. I am writing in support of expanding the Safe at Home program allowing program participants to purchase property while maintaining their confidentiality.

Prior to joining The Lighthouse in July, 2018, I have spent over 25-years working in non-profit. My time spent with the American Red Cross of Fairfield and Hocking Counties, FairHoPe Hospice and United Way

of Fairfield County all have aligned nicely with the mission of The Lighthouse. In the nearly two-years that I have been serving victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, privacy and even secrecy have been considered a crucial component of a victim's safety. This is why my shelter location is still confidential - survivor privacy is critical to their safety.

In this age of technology, it has become more difficult than ever for survivors to limit the sharing of their personal information. In less than a second or two, with an internet search on the Fairfield County Auditor's site, and a victim's location is revealed. Some survivors are so fearful of someone finding them that they choose to be homeless, or couch surf in order to not have to sign a lease and fear being located. This has and will prevent many survivors from purchasing homes, fearing that a stalker or abuser whom they have fled will be able to find them.

Regardless of laws attempting to protect survivor privacy, sensitive information can be exposed. This leaves survivors in danger, unwilling to report abuse and/or feeling like they cannot purchase a home. I encourage you to please expand the Safe at Home program and allow those trying to avoid re-victimization to rebuild their lives, and that of their children, with less concern of coming in contact with their past abuser.

Thank you.

*Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.*