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Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 3
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House Criminal Justice Committee

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify alongside my joint sponsor Representative Boyd on House Bill 3, which is better known as Aisha's Law.

Aisha's Law will make meaningful strides to protect victims of domestic violence and prevent these tragedies from occurring. I would like to emphasize the clear and urgent need to protect Ohioans from domestic violence by adopting into law the provisions Representative Boyd described. We can agree that all Ohioans deserve to feel safe in their homes and communities. For victims of domestic violence, however, that sense of security is shattered, as they are left to pick up the pieces of their lives while constantly living in fear of another incident.

Incidents of domestic violence occur in every corner of Ohio, and in far greater numbers than are often realized. In 2017, there were a staggering 37,725 domestic violence incident charges in the state of Ohio. Butler County, which Chairman Lang and I both represent, had 1,105 DVI charges. The Dove House, Butler County's only domestic violence shelter, reports that in 2017, they provided protective shelter to 103 survivors, and took over 380 crisis calls. Butler County is not alone. Domestic violence truly does impact every county and every community in our state.

On a personal level, I was honored to be asked to join Representative Boyd in sponsoring this legislation, as my own mother was abused by her second husband. After their brief marriage ended, he stalked her on her way home from work, pulled up next to her in his car, hit her with a tire iron, threw her in the car, and raped her. She escaped, but her lawyer told her to move to the top floor of the YWCA for her own safety and that of her family. Imagine not being able to be in your family's home because someone could harm all of you. Thankfully, my mother got out of this dangerous situation and met my father. Far too many individuals, however, continue to be abused and live in fear – constantly looking over their shoulders, worrying about when the next time will be. That is why it is so critical that we pass Aisha's Law, to make Ohio a safer place and to let victims know that we care about them and that there is hope.

Thank you again Chairman for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 3. Representative Boyd and I would be happy to answer any questions members of the Committee may have.