

LWV Ohio Proponent Testimony on HB242

Aisha's Law – Domestic Violence

Before the House Criminal Justice Committee

By Sarah Warner

June 12, 2019

Chairman Lang and esteemed members of the Committee:

Thank you for your time and consideration today, and for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of House Bill 3. My name is Sarah Warner, and I am here today from the volunteer Lobby Corps of the League of Women Voters of Ohio. The League of Women Voters of Ohio is a non-partisan, political organization comprised of 33 local leagues across the state, as a member of a national organization comprised of over 700 leagues nationwide. *The League of Women Voters supports violence prevention programs in all communities and action that support: public and private development and coordination of programs that emphasize the primary prevention of violence; the active role of government and social institutions in preventing violent behavior, and the allocation of public monies in government programs to prevent violence.* To that end we encourage you to support HB 3.

House Bill 3 is an ambitious bill that sets out to cover a lot of ground, from expansion of offenses such as “aggravated murder” and “child endangerment” and definitions of “family or household member” to the creation, and training of peace officers and “Domestic Violence High Risk Teams”, and even the treatment of domestic violence cases in evidentiary procedures and prosecution. The broad spectrum of things covered in this bill are indicative of the sheer necessity of protective legislation in the area of domestic violence, in other words, there isn’t an area covered by the bill that hasn’t shown some form of need.

In my research, I came across a myriad of statistics relating to domestic violence in its many forms with its familiar companions – like stalking, gun violence, and rape. For example, the National Domestic Violence Hotline reports that “1 in 4 women (24.3%) and 1 in 7 men (13.8%) aged 18 and older in the United States have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime, and Intimate Partner Violence alone affects more than 12 million people each year.”¹

To break this down a little more, young women between the ages of 16 and 24 are experiencing the highest rate of intimate partner violence and sexual assault, and within this number most female victims

¹ <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/statistics/>

of intimate partner violence had been previously victimized by the same offender, (including 77% of females ages 18 to 24, 76% of females ages 25 to 34, and 81% of females ages 35 to 49). The National Network to End Domestic Violence adds to this that approximately 15.5 million children are exposed to domestic violence every year and The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect suggests that domestic violence may be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities in this country.

Numbers like this are just a fingernail scratch on the research that has been gathered on the effect domestic violence has on families, individuals, and communities. A closer look at the numbers shows that domestic violence disproportionately affects women (1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experience severe intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner contact sexual violence, and/or intimate partner stalking²), communities of color (for example African American females experience intimate partner violence at a rate 35% higher than that of white females, and about 2.5 times the rate of women of other races)³, and the LGBTQ community (44% of percent of lesbian women and 61% of bisexual women – compared to 35% of heterosexual women – experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime⁴).

In a world where according to CNN “of all women globally who were the victims of homicide in 2012, an estimated half were killed by intimate partners or family members.⁵” it makes sense to consider training and creation of a specialist organization to assess lethality of domestic violence situations and train our peace officers. With numbers like those shared earlier it is easy to see how great the need for greater understanding of the issue, appropriate responses to each domestic violence situation, and support of the victims in our community is. The statistics are downright staggering, but solutions-- or at least steps towards them-- are within our reach. Please support House Bill 3.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

-Sarah Warner

League of Women Voters of Ohio Lobby Corps

The League of Women Voters of Ohio, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

² <https://ncadv.org/statistics>

³ https://www.doj.state.or.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/women_of_color_network_facts_domestic_violence_2006.pdf

⁴ <https://www.domesticshelters.org/resources/statistics/demographics-and-domestic-violence>

⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2013/12/06/us/domestic-intimate-partner-violence-fast-facts/index.html>

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