



Proponent Testimony submitted to the Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee
House Bill 350
Camille Crary, Director of Legal Services & Public Policy
Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence
May 28, 2020

Chair Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland and members of the Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 350. As Ohio's statewide coalition, the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV) advocates for comprehensive responses and rape crisis services for survivors and empowers communities to prevent sexual violence.

In 2016, OAESV vigorously supported passage of SB 195, and the corresponding provision in combined SB 331. As this committee is aware, five municipalities challenged the constitutionality of SB 331, claiming its multi-subject coverage (including pet store, dog breeding, animal fighting, bestiality, micro wireless facilities, and minimum wage matters) violated Article II, Section 15(D) of the Ohio Constitution. Specifically, Section 15(D) provides, “[n]o bill shall contain more than one subject, which shall be clearly expressed in its title.” The municipalities prevailed, and the Sixth District Court of Appeals upheld the lower court ruling, leaving the Sixth District counties (Erie, Fulton, Huron, Lucas, Ottawa, Sandusky, Williams and Wood), without a legal prohibition against bestiality. For the following reasons, OAESV supports Representative Hoop’s efforts to restore a statewide law against bestiality, which received significant bipartisan support when initially passed.

Research from social scientists and criminal justice agencies consistently confirms connections between sex crimes against animals and other crimes against humans.¹ Extensive research provides that subjecting animals to sex acts indicates a higher propensity for interpersonal violence and an increased likelihood of committing or suffering from child abuse.² Even more alarming, one study reported that 96% of juveniles who admitted to engaging in sexual acts against animals later admitted to perpetrating sex offenses against human beings.³ Similarly, FBI researchers examining

¹ See, e.g., *The Humane Society of the United States, First Strike: The Violence Connection*, http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/abuse/first_strike.pdf; Ascione, Frank R., & Phil Arkow (1999). *Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Animal Abuse: Linking the Circles of Compassion for Prevention and Intervention*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue Research Foundation; Beetz, A. M. (2005). *Bestiality and zoophilia: Sexual relations with animals*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press; Ressler, R.K., A.W. Burgess, and J.E. Douglas (1988). *Sexual homicide: Patterns and motives*. New York: Lexington Books.

² The Humane Society of the United States, *First Strike: The Violence Connection*, http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/abuse/first_strike.pdf, 3-4.

³ Fleming, W. M., Jory, B., Burton, D. L. (2002). *Characteristics of juvenile offenders admitting to sexual activity with nonhuman animals*, *Society & Animals* 10(1), 32-45.

a sample of serial sexually violent homicide perpetrators found that a substantial number of those offenders had committed severe animal abuse of a sexual or physical nature during childhood or adolescence.⁴

OAESV trusts the validity of the body of research connecting sexual and physical violence against animals with concurrent or later sexual violence against human beings. Additionally, OAESV supports the common finding that criminalizing sexual conduct with animals will provide the state the opportunity to:

- Prevent future crimes against human beings⁵
- Treat offenders through psychological evaluations and interventions
- Create an appropriate criminal record that accounts for animal abuse when sentencing for other crimes against human beings
- Detect sexual violence against children and family members
- Bolster the understanding that sexual acts require consent by both parties
- Prevent significantly damaging, oftentimes fatal, harm against animals

When OAESV initially provided testimony on SB 195, Ohio was one of 14 states without existing law or pending legislation prohibiting subjecting animals to sexual acts.⁵ Today, just four states lack such a law.⁶ SB 195 and the subsequent SB 331 appropriately addressed the severity of subjecting animals to sexual harm, and strengthened our state's capacity to create and improve animal offender treatment, improve sexual violence prevention, and increase safety. It is critical that a bestiality crime be uniformly in effect in all 88 Ohio counties.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 350. I am available for any questions from committee members via email or phone at ccrary@oaesv.org or 216-658-1381.

⁴ Ressler, R.K., A.W. Burgess, and J.E. Douglas (1988). *Sexual homicide: Patterns and motives*. New York: Lexington Books.

⁵ Wisch, Rebecca F. (2014). *Table of State Sexual Assault Laws*. Michigan State University: Animal & Legal Historical Center, <https://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-animal-sexual-assault-laws>.

⁶ Wisch, Rebecca F. (2019). *Table of State Sexual Assault Laws*. Michigan State University: Animal & Legal Historical Center, <https://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-animal-sexual-assault-laws>. (Last visited May 25, 2020).