

51st House District

Portions of Butler County, including
Hamilton and Fairfield, Ross
Township and portions of Fairfield,
Hanover and St. Clair townships

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Sara P. Carruthers
Ohio State Representative

Committees

-Finance-
-Finance Subcommittee on
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-Health-
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Commissions/Councils/Boards

-Commission on Infant Mortality-
-Early Childhood Advisory Council-
-Ohio Children's Trust Fund-
-Ohio Arts Council-

Substitute House Bill 3 Sponsor Testimony **House Finance Committee** **May 19, 2020**

Co-Chairmen Oelslager and Callender, Vice Chairman Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Substitute House Bill 3, which would be known as Aisha's Law if this bill becomes law.

Substitute House Bill 3 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 in her written testimony. 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 2018, the Ohio Attorney General reported there were a staggering 38,475 domestic violence incident (DVI) charges in the state of Ohio; Butler County, which I represent, had 1,112 DVI charges. The Dove House, Butler County's only domestic violence shelter, reported they have served 187 victims since January, which is a dramatic increase. Butler County is not alone. Domestic violence truly does impact every county and every community in our state, especially during the pandemic.

I would like to read an excerpt from Representative Boyd's written testimony regarding the appropriation:

"Substitute House Bill 3 makes an appropriation of \$150,000 to the Ohio Police Officers' Training Academy (OPATA) for the purpose of creating and training peace officers on effectively using a Lethality Assessment Screening Tool. This appropriation amount was brought to the joint sponsors by the Office of the Attorney General after numerous discussions with myself and Rep. Carruthers, followed by conversations with the Office of Criminal Justice Services and Dr. Jackie Campbell, principal investigator and creator of evidence-based risk assessment screening tools and protocols used in other states and municipalities.

Per our conversations with the Office of the Attorney General they provided us the following exchange to confirm how they would intend to roll out OPATA's training. The office of the Attorney General met with the Office of Criminal Justice Services to discuss the training requirements and exchanged background knowledge on how Dr. Campbell and other threat assessment tools are taught and have developed the following plan of action which will save the state money, while providing lifesaving training on the Aisha's Law lethality protocol and fulfilling the mission to save lives."

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 Substitute House Bill 3, to make Ohio a safer place and to let victims know that we care about them and that there is hope.

Substitute House Bill 3 passed out of House Criminal Justice earlier today with a vote of 12 - 0. I would like to thank all the interested groups that participated in this bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on Substitute House Bill 3.