

**Melanie Simms
Proponent Testimony
Ohio Senate Bill 207
November 28, 2017**

Chairman Bacon, Vice Chairman Dolan, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 207.

My name is Melanie Simms and my identical twin sister, Monica Jeter was abruptly torn from my life three years ago. She was a fatal victim of domestic violence. Monica was not just my twin sister but also my best friend, and even though I was 7 minutes older than her, I looked up to her in more ways than I got to share with her. I learned a lot from her, from watching her parent her five children, and how to feed a large family on sometimes one income, and even how to apply just the right amount of eye makeup. But I don't get to look up to her for these things anymore, because she was taken from my life. My sister was also a great wife to the man who murdered her even trying to work things out after he strangled her in January of 2014. I believe even at that point that she knew deep down in her heart that he was not good for her, but she always gave her all in all she did so she gave another good fight with him, to try to keep her family together. He did 11 days in jail and after a couple of months of probation and counseling had convinced her he had changed for the better. I believe if non-fatal strangulation had been a felony, my sister would have had enough time to gain strength and the self-confidence she needed to keep her husband away if he would have been given more time in jail and more consequences for his horrible actions. But he wasn't and 10 months later my poor sister was stabbed more times than could be counted and 32 days later passed away from organ failure due to the significant blood loss from her multiple stab wounds. Please do not allow another family to suffer through the continuous heart break me and mine are suffering through. Please make non-fatal strangulation a felony.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.