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Committees:

Criminal Justice, *Chair*
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Senator John Eklund—Sponsor Testimony
Senate Bill 145
Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
June 24, 2015

Good Afternoon Chairman Coley, Vice-Chair Seitz, Ranking Member Yuko, and members of the Senate Civil Justice Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Senate Bill 145. During the 130th General Assembly, the Senate Criminal Justice Committee heard a very compelling story brought to us by Representative Anielski in the form of House Bill 74. After hearing the account of Ms. Lori Siwik, an attorney from Broadview Heights, I decided to fully support this legislation and offer a companion bill while Representative Anielski re-introduces the bill in the House which is now House Bill 151.

Ms. Lori Siwik became a victim of cyber stalking and cyber harassment in 2005 and 2006. Lori unfortunately discovered during those two years that local law enforcement was not able to assist her due to the type of harassment she was experiencing.

Senate Bill 145 would do two things; first, it would expand the offenses of menacing by stalking and telecommunications harassment. Secondly, it would prohibit a person from knowingly causing another person to believe that the offender will cause physical harm or mental distress to the person's immediate family. SB 145 brings some of our current laws on menacing and stalking up to date and will provide more peace of mind to the victims and families of those who have experienced these terrible situations.

I am hopeful that the legislation may be used as a tool by any individual in the future that may become a victim of cyber stalking. The bill has the support of the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys' Association. The bill is necessary due to the heightened use of technology and the prevalence of using cyber stalking to harass a victim. We need to send a strong, clear message to those cyber-stalkers that Ohio will not tolerate this behavior.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 145. I would be glad to answer any questions you may have.