



**Proponent testimony submitted to the
Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee
Senate Bill 17
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July 17, 2019**

Chair Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 17. 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.

Senate Bill 17 seeks critical privacy protections for survivors of § 2907.02 Rape and § 2907.03 Sexual Battery. Specifically, if passed, Senate Bill 17 would prohibit law enforcement agencies and their employees from publishing in any report available online the name, date of birth, home or work address, social security number, telephone number, email address, age, or any other information likely to identify the victim. This bill addresses one of the top barriers to survivors making sex crime reports to law enforcement – privacy concerns.

The *National Crime Victimization Survey* published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that from 2010 to 2016, only 230 of every 1,000 rapes were reported to law enforcement. The same agency's 2013 publication, *Female Victims of Sexual Violence, 1994-2010*, reported that 20% of female survivors did not report for fear of retaliation, and another 13% declined due to a belief that their victimization was a highly personal matter. Though these data sources focus on women, the concerns reported are consistent across all genders. OAESV works directly with survivors across the state and provides technical assistance to rape crisis centers providing services to the same. Because of that work, we can attest to the enormous role privacy concerns play in survivor decisions to report.

Many survivors fear that family members they are not ready to tell will find out about the assault. Others fear employers will learn about the victimization and retaliate based on outdated understandings of sexual violence or feared complications if the accused is another employee. Still others face the very real threat that the perpetrator will retaliate immediately upon seeing identifying information that tips them off about the report. This is particularly acute in cases where the victim and perpetrator share a social group, workplace, or academic institution. Ultimately, the interaction

between trauma and fear of privacy breaches reduces the number of law enforcement reports, thus decreasing offender accountability.

It is deeply unfortunate that this bill is a response to the actual online publication of survivor identifying information. The problem this legislation seeks to address is not hypothetical. Survivors who report sexual violence risk public identification at the earliest stages of their journey. Depending on the facts of a given case, this can expose survivors to retaliation by their perpetrators, coworkers, friends, family, and communities.

Senate Bill 17 is a no to very low cost solution that protects survivor privacy. Due to Ohio's constitutional home rule, each Ohio county is responsible for its own policies and procedures, including those related to reporting, docket formats and access, and data collection. It is thus extremely sensible that the Ohio Revised Code would specifically prohibit publication of identifying information. This concise statute will eliminate confusion and provide consistent protection across the state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. OAESV strongly encourages passage of SB 17. I am available to answer your questions today or by email at tucker-lauderman@oaesv.org.