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***Senator Stephanie Kunze***  
***Senate Bill 265***  
***February 12, 2020***  
***Senate Judiciary Committee***  
***Sponsor Testimony***

Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for allowing me to present sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 265.

Senate Bill 265 would create an enhancement for the offense of domestic violence when the victim is a functionally impaired person.

Domestic violence is often difficult to detect because the perpetrators are family or other household members residing with their victims. Victims who have a functional impairment can be especially vulnerable to this type of abuse.

According to the YWCA, in 2013 the rate of violent victimization against persons with disabilities was double the rate for those without disabilities for nearly every age group measured.<sup>1</sup> Further, women with disabilities have a 40% greater chance of intimate partner violence than women without disabilities.<sup>2</sup>

Senate Bill 265 would add an enhancement to Ohio law that provides for a stronger penalty when an individual with a functional impairment is the victim of domestic violence. This is similar to existing enhancements in Ohio law for the crimes of assault and theft when the victim is an individual with a functional impairment. This enhancement would make domestic violence against an individual with a functional impairment a misdemeanor in the third degree or a felony in the fourth degree, depending on the nature of the violation. This is consistent with other enhancements in Ohio law.

Chairman Eklund and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee; thank you for allowing me to present sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 265. I am happy to answer any questions that the committee might have.

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<sup>1</sup> Harrel, E. Crime Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009–2013 - Statistical Tables, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2015).

<sup>2</sup> American Psychological Association, Abuse of Women with Disabilities Fact Sheet Retrieved 2017 from <http://www.apa.org/topics/violence/women-disabilities.pdf>.