

Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee  
Wednesday, December 2, 2020  
House Bill 3 Proponent Testimony

My name is Phyllis Carlson-Riehm and I represent ACTION OHIO Coalition For Battered Women. I am presenting proponent testimony for House Bill 3, legislation addressing high-risk domestic violence and victimization, introduced by Representatives Janine Boyd and Sarah Carruthers.

ACTION OHIO was founded in the 1970's when domestic violence was beginning to be recognized as a crime and there was growing awareness of the need for safe places for victims, as well as new laws to respond to the violence. Previously abusive behavior between partners was considered a private matter for the particular married couple or dating partners.

Since those early days domestic violence shelters were established across Ohio and state laws were enacted to protect victims and to hold batterers accountable. Although it is true that many domestic violence victims leave abusive relationships, there are still many tragic situations that result in serious injuries, long-term trauma and deaths. Those are the most high risk domestic violence cases.

The provisions of House Bill 3 address the dynamics of high risk cases, by amending existing laws and enacting new laws to save the lives of victims and their partners, as well as their children, other family members and law enforcement officers responding to domestic calls.

House Bill 3 is referred to as Aisha's Law, honoring the life of Aisha Frazier of Shaker Heights, who was brutally murdered while in her vehicle with her two children as witnesses. The murderer was her ex-husband, a man with status and position in his community, who had served as a judge and state representative in the Ohio General Assembly.

House Bill 3 provisions include, but are not limited to, the following:

Expands the offense of "domestic violence" to prohibit recklessly impeding the normal breathing or blood circulation of a family or household member by applying pressure to the throat or neck, or by covering the nose and mouth, of the family or household member.

Requires a court setting bail in a criminal case or determining a felony or misdemeanor sentence to consider the results of any lethality assessment screening conducted in a case by law enforcement if any such results are available, as required under the bill.

Creates a new type of protection order described as an "emergency protection order" that may be obtained by a law enforcement officer, on behalf of and with the consent of a victim of domestic violence, at any time when the court is not available for regular business.

Requires each agency, instrumentality, and political subdivision to:

- Identify local and regional domestic violence advocacy services to which individuals experiencing domestic violence or violation of a protection order and determined to be high risk may be referred; and
- Adopt written policies and procedures for the peace officers to follow in screening alleged incidents of domestic violence and alleged incidents of violating a protection order for referral to local or regional domestic violence advocacy services.

Expands the types of domestic violence-related training that must be included in peace officer biennial professional training.

Requires the Attorney General to adopt rules to require that peace officer basic training include training on evidence-based lethality assessment screening tools.

ACTION OHIO Coalition For Battered Women strongly supports passage of House Bill 3. It will bring Ohio strangulation laws and penalties more closely into alignment with the laws of most other states, expand the use of lethality screening tools and assessments by law enforcement officers and judges, and provide other essential protections for victims of domestic violence. In short, House Bill 3 will save victims' lives and give many Ohioans the chance for a brighter, violence-free future.

Thank you for your consideration of our viewpoint.

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