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Ohio Council of YWCAs
OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE
REPRESENTATIVE JEFF LaRe, CHAIR
PROPONENT TESTIMONY OF H.B.3
May 20, 2021**

Chair LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony for House Bill 3. I am Wendy Waters-Connell, CEO of the YWCA Hamilton and a member of the Ohio Council of YWCAs. We support favorable consideration of this bill by this Committee.

Aisha's Law will save lives; I know this because I am the CEO of the only domestic violence shelter in Butler County and I see the effects every day. I would like to stress the distinct and urgent need to protect all Ohio citizens from domestic violence. The provisions of the proposed bill will increase the chances for every human being to feel safe and protected from the horrors of violence by someone they know, and perhaps have loved. These crimes are often horrific, and predictable. They shatter entire families and leave children traumatized for a lifetime. Let us do what we can to prevent them from happening. Aisha's Law is an additional effort.

Incidents of intimate partner violence occur in every part of our state. The volume is high. In 2017, there were over 37,000 domestic violence incident charges. Butler County is 7th in Ohio for DV incidents with more than 1000 domestic violence incident charges. In our YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter, called Dove House, we served over 103 survivors in 2017 and had more than 350 crisis calls answered on the hotline. Domestic violence impacts every corner of our state.

This testimony is personal. Many of us who work in this field do so because our lives have been touched by the trauma of domestic violence and abuse. No child should grow up with the memories of witnessing harm to their mother, father, siblings or other family members. Those dreams haunt for a lifetime. I choose to be in this role because I want a different outcome for our children. We must try to shape a peaceful future; one without horrific loss and pain. Please pass this legislation to protect vulnerable individuals from a fate like Aisha's. I urge you to support House Bill 3.

Thank you again Chair LaRe for the opportunity to submit this testimony.