

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chairman Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House criminal Justice Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of HB 121, a bi-partisan bill to eliminate the spousal exception for sex offenses including rape. I am an Ohio voter, woman and wife and I am overcome with disbelief that we have yet to pass this legislation in Ohio. What is wrong with our legislature?

Violence against women is on the rise and just 2 weeks ago, I witnessed 4 agencies of first responders in our backyard, with canines & a helicopter searching for a domestic abuser at midnight-in Dublin. Up to 10% of sexual assaults occur within the confines of marriage and that can go as high as 70% if domestic violence is present, this legislation is urgently needed.

The spousal exception for rape, sexual battery, unlawful sexual contact with a minor, gross sexual imposition and sexual imposition is inhumane. It is unacceptable that Ohio law has not been updated to eliminate this exception. This bill has broad support in the community and bi-partisan sponsors. Ohio needs to pass this at once.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I ask you to vote YES on HB 121 and send this bill to the House floor.