



Proponent testimony on Sub. House Bill 110
Senate Finance Committee
Rosa Beltré, Executive Director
Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence
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Chair Dolan, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Substitute House Bill 110. 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.

We are very grateful that Substitute H.B. 110 increases the Rape Crisis Center Line Item to \$7.3 million each fiscal year. This increase is desperately needed by Ohio's 35 rape crisis centers that support 77 Ohio counties. However, 11 counties remain without access to rape crisis center services, and substantial VOCA cuts will force rape crisis centers around the state to lay off staff and reduce services without additional state support.

In 2020, Ohio rape crisis center Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants were cut by more than \$8 million. At the same time, the monthly rate of crisis hotline calls went up 34% to an average of **2,609 calls per month, and the** monthly number of survivors accessing rape crisis advocacy during the pandemic **increased by 50%**.

The federal cuts forced rape crisis programs to lay off staff and cut services. In February we were told to prepare for an additional 34% reduction in VOCA funds effective October 1, 2021. However, many of Ohio's rape crisis programs were provided insight from the Ohio Attorney General's office confirming that they should expect **more significant** cuts this October.

As federal funding accounts for as much as 60% of rape crisis budgets, these cuts are devastating for Ohio rape crisis center programs' ability to support survivors in your districts.

As reliance must shift from VOCA funding, we respectfully urge this Committee and the Ohio Senate to **include an additional increase bringing the Rape Crisis Center line item to \$10 million** each fiscal year. These funds would allow centers to continue to address the needs of

survivors of sexual assault. The additional increase is needed to help offset additional federal cuts and to meet the escalating demand¹ for services in counties with existing programs.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

¹ Though the number of survivors served statewide has increased 27% since 2015, in many rural counties, the reality is much more severe. In Warren County, for example, ARCS Shelter has experienced an increase of over 100% since 2015.