

51st House District

Portions of Butler County, including Hamilton and Fairfield, Ross Township and portions of Fairfield, Hanover and St. Clair townships

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Sara P. Carruthers
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Committees

-Behavioral Health & Recovery Supports (Chair)-
-Finance-
-Families, Aging & Human Services-

Commissions/Councils/Boards

-Commission on Infant Mortality-
-Early Childhood Advisory Council-
-Ohio Children's Trust Fund-
-Ohio Arts Council-

House Bill 3 Sponsor Testimony **Senate Judiciary Committee** **December 7, 2021**

Chairman Manning, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak on House Bill 3. I am happy to join with my joint sponsor, Representative Boyd, on this important legislation.

Substitute House Bill 3 will make meaningful strides to protect victims of domestic violence and prevent these tragedies from occurring. I would like to emphasize the clear and urgent need to protect Ohioans from domestic violence by adopting into law the provisions Representative Boyd described in her speech. We can agree that all Ohioans deserve to feel safe in their homes and communities. For victims of domestic violence, however, that sense of security is shattered, as they are left to pick up the pieces of their lives while constantly living in fear of another incident.

Incidents of domestic violence occur in every corner of Ohio, and in far greater numbers than are often realized. In 2020, the Ohio Attorney General reported there were a staggering thirty one thousand six hundred and forty five domestic violence incident (DVI) charges in the state of Ohio; Butler County, which I represent, had 850 DVI charges. The Dove House, Butler County's only domestic violence shelter, reported they have averaged 138 month for the past 4 months; pre-pandemic average was 30-40 calls per month. Butler County is not alone. Domestic violence truly does impact every county and every community in our state, especially during the pandemic.

On a personal level, I was honored to be asked to join Representative Boyd in sponsoring this legislation, as my own mother was abused by her second husband. After their brief marriage ended, he stalked her on her way home from work, pulled up next to her in his car, hit her with a tire iron, threw her in the car, and raped her. She escaped, but her lawyer told her to move to the top floor of the YWCA for her own safety and that of her family. Imagine not being able to be in your family's home because someone could harm all of you. Thankfully, my mother got out of this dangerous situation and met my father. Far too many individuals, however, continue to be abused and live in fear – constantly looking over their shoulders, worrying about when the next

time will be and trying to hide it from the outside world. That is why it is so critical that we pass Substitute House Bill 3, to make Ohio a safer place and to let victims know that we care about them and that there is hope.

Please remember we increased domestic violence funding in the budget, so we know this issue isn't going away.

Chairman Manning and committee members, thank you for your time on this important issue and we would be happy to answer any questions.