

Chris Sterwerf
Ohioans for Child Protection Member
Proponent Testimony HB 322
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Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Galonski, and House Civil Justice Committee members thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on House Bill 322.

My name is Chris Sterwerf, and I am from Liberty Township in Butler County. I'm a graduate of Miami University of Ohio. I'm a consultant in the collision repair of heavy-duty truck industry and run a family business in Fairfield, Ohio. I served as Chairman of the State of Ohio Board of Motor Vehicle Repair. I am a member of Ohioans for Child Protection, and I am a survivor of childhood sexual abuse.

As a childhood sexual abuse victim, from as young as I can remember to the age of 10, one of my biggest fears and most significant obstacles to coming forward was not being believed. It takes tremendous energy, courage, and support for a victim to come forward. It takes even more to find a child abuser guilty in a court of law. For a victim, the mere thought of it seems daunting and hopeless because evidence is so difficult to find.

If House Bill 322 becomes law, it will give victims a chance to see their abusers guilty of something, even if it isn't rape or gross sexual imposition. However, it's not just something; it's monumental to the victim. It may just be a misdemeanor or minor felony, but it's validation that a grave wrong was about to happen or has happened. Light will have been shined in the darkness that is the victim's life. It will provide parents with the tools to stop a child abuser before they have a chance to hurt a child. It may even be enough to stop that abuser from a future of exponential victims over the criminal's lifetime.

Child sexual abusers know how to manipulate and warp the mind of a child. They are experts at driving a wedge between the child and those who love and look after them. Evidence from text messages, social media communication, notes, and other electronic communication will help victims to show society what the abuser's true intent is.

House Bill 322 will help to validate that a wrong happened and possibly prevent something far worse in the future. It puts the abuser on society's radar by tagging them with a criminal record and provides a public record for victims to be believed.

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony. I am available for any questions.