



**House Commerce and Labor Committee  
Proponent Testimony for Senate Bill 90  
Emily Gemar, Public Policy Director  
Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence  
January 9, 2024**

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member McNally, and members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 90. The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV) is the statewide coalition for Ohio's Rape Crisis Centers. We advocate for comprehensive responses and rape crisis services for survivors and we empower communities to prevent sexual violence. OAESV is a membership-based organization with member programs spanning 78 counties in Ohio. Each program, or Rape Crisis Center, provides 24/7 hotline and hospital response to their local communities, along with legal advocacy and other supportive services. Many of the Rape Crisis Center advocates who provide these services are social workers with licensure or are in the process of seeking licensure.

Social Workers offer valuable immediate and long-term care for survivors of sexual assault. They provide supportive services and advocacy to survivors and families in a wide variety of settings and work collaboratively with other professionals to improve outcomes. Working in sexual assault services and crime victim services allow social workers to impact their communities and clients' lives by providing advocacy, empowerment, and trauma-informed interventions to people of all ages.

Despite the high demand for social work services, we are currently limited to services within state borders. In our work throughout the state, we know that Ohioans in rural communities and communities with limited services suffer a lack of access to Social Workers for recovery and support in the aftermath of trauma. Senate Bill 90 would help alleviate these barriers and allow an expanded network of Social Workers to serve Ohio's communities.

OAESV supports the Social Work Licensure Compact and multi-state licensing to increase Ohio's access to social work services and benefit our workforce in Ohio. Allowing Social Workers to expand their field of practice will help retain skilled workers in Ohio and enhance continuity of care for clients who travel or relocate. At the core of our work, OAESV seeks to promote options and eliminate barriers for survivors of sexual violence. Multi-state licensing for Social Workers will break down barriers to client care and enhance our state's ability to protect public safety.

Senate Bill 90 is a step in the right direction to ensure that Ohioans have access to critical social work services. OAESV would like to thank Senator Roegner for her leadership with Senate Bill 90, which is leading the expansion of social work in Ohio.