



Representative Jeff LaRe
73rd House District

Representative Kevin Miller
69th House District

House Bill 111 Sponsor Testimony

Chairwoman Abrams, Vice-Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 111. This piece of legislation is a re-introduction of HB 735 from the 134th General Assembly. House Bill 111 will raise the penalties for felony domestic violence offenders from a “low tier” third degree felony to a “high tier” third degree felony. It will also create a presumption in favor of a prison term for such an offense.

Currently, repeat domestic violence offenders, or those who have been convicted of similar offenses against family or household members, are charged with a third-degree felony. Such a charge subjects them to the “lower-tier” sentencing range of 9-36 months. However, to have reached the level of a third-degree domestic

violence penalty, the offender had to have repeated a similar offense. Thus, the offender's remaining in the "lower-tier" sentencing range of 9-36 months does not sufficiently reflect and address either the severity or frequency of the domestic abuse committed. In order to remedy this, under House Bill 111, the sentencing range offenders are subject to is upgraded to a "higher tier" range of 12-60 months.

This proposed legislation also creates a presumption favoring a prison term for third degree felony domestic violence offenses if offenders knew that the victim was pregnant at the time of the violation.

Both an increase in the minimum of the sentencing range for repeat domestic violence offenders and the addition of a presumption favoring a prison term for offenders who knew victims were pregnant actively work to protect victims of domestic violence. They each serve to shield victims from a repeated cycle of domestic abuse that the current laws do not adequately defend against.

Thank you all, again, for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 111.

We are happy to answer any questions that the committee may have at this time.