

Nicole Schultz  
Testimony Supporting House Bill 111  
Criminal Justice Committee  
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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. For me, advocacy began the day I attended my former co-workers calling hours. It began when her life ended abruptly in one of the most tragic murder-suicide cases my hometown had ever experienced. It was in the moments I spent hugging her grieving mother that I found my voice. It was the reality of a young child being left without parents that I found the courage to advocate for change. It was this tragedy that put me on a path to supporting other victims and survivors of domestic violence, to join the Board for our local shelter, and to one day begin working with Representatives LaRe and Miller on this invaluable piece of legislation.

When I met with Representative LaRe a year ago, our objectives in drafting a meaningful and purposeful bill were both clear and concise: to address repetitive domestic violence, to aid in the reduction of domestic violence-related homicides and to adequately hold abusers accountable for violent offenses, including those that bring harm to an unborn child. It is my hope that this legislation will not only accomplish these goals, but will allow victims the time and opportunity to leave their dangerous living situations. With a presumption in favor of a prison term, an imperative change included in this bill, the ability for survivors to heal and move forward is made possible.

Our focus here today is not on first-time offenders, nor on charges that have been dismissed or reduced to lesser convictions. Our focus, very specifically, is on individuals with multiple domestic violence convictions and a profound history of abusive behavior. Our primary goals collectively address the need for enhanced public safety measures and I firmly believe that House Bill 111 will make a difference in our communities. I am confident that its passing would increase the courts' ability to save lives.

Throughout this year-long process, I have truly felt blessed; blessed to have the support and example of two selfless and respectable legislators, blessed to work with advocacy groups and experts, and blessed to be standing here today with the hope of making a positive difference in our great state. Thank you again for the privilege to come before you today and for your consideration of House Bill 111.