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State Representative, Ohio House District 25

HB 690 – Increase penalty for repeat Voyeurism. Sponsor Testimony

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 690. This bill aims to amend section 2907.08 of the Revised Code to increase penalties for repeat offenders of voyeurism.

Voyeurism is a deeply invasive act in which an individual derives sexual gratification from observing unsuspecting people who, at times, are partially undressed, naked, or engaged in sexual acts. Since voyeurism is classified as a non-contact sexual offense, it is currently treated as a misdemeanor under Ohio law, with no provisions to escalate the penalty to a felony after multiple offenses.

I first became aware of the severity of this issue during the **ninth arrest** of an individual in Cincinnati for voyeurism. His offenses ranged from entering a woman's room to watch her sleep at an assisted living facility in Anderson Township, to "peeping" into windows in Liberty Township.

Another case involved an individual at a Target in Colerain Township who was secretly photographing women in dressing rooms for sexual arousal. After briefly being jailed and bailed out, he was placed on EMU, also known as an electronic monitoring unit. However, his criminal behavior did not stop. He was arrested once again shortly after, this time at a Kohl's in Fairfield, for committing the same offense. He was still wearing his EMU at the time.

These examples underscore the profound violation of privacy, the unpredictability, and the harm that accompanies voyeurism. **Imagine being in a vulnerable state—whether in a grocery store, at home, or in the care of an assisted living facility—and unknowingly being watched.** It is an egregious invasion of privacy, and it can cause lasting emotional distress.

While Ohio does have correctional centers designed to treat sexual offenders, we must acknowledge that treatment is not always successful. **Recidivism remains a significant**

concern. This is why we must ensure that repeat offenders face harsher penalties, not only to punish their behavior but to protect our most vulnerable populations—our children, the elderly, and the general public. If we fail to impose stronger penalties for repeat offenders, we risk allowing these individuals to escalate to even more dangerous behaviors.

How long before voyeurism turns into a sexual assault or a more serious offense?

House Bill 690 will provide a necessary tool in our efforts to keep our communities safe by strengthening penalties for repeat offenders. This bill is a critical step in addressing the growing concern of voyeurism and ensuring that those who repeatedly commit these offenses face appropriate consequences.

This bill would send a clear message—that Ohio does not tolerate repeated offenses that violate personal privacy and safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I now turn the floor over to my Joint Sponsor Representative Williams.

