

Statement of support for Senate Bill 109  
Before the Criminal Justice Committee  
Representative Cindy Abrams Chair

Chairwoman Cindy Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, ranking member Brown, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to present supportive testimony for Senate Bill 109.

My name is Jeff Kohler. I am a lifelong Ohioan. With the exception of the 4 years on active duty and 1 combat deployment to Iraq, I have lived my entire life in the state of Ohio. I am a 2012 graduate of The Ohio State University under the Post 9/11 G I Bill. I am here today to speak in favor of Senate Bill 109. In 1996 at 2920 Market Ave, Canton Ohio I was molested by my medical provider at the age of 10. On August 1, 2000, I reported the sexual abuse I experienced to 3 medical providers at this same address however I never spoke to any police officers, any mental health providers. I was merely told "sorry this happened to you, it will never happen again". In 2019 while listening to a NPR radio story regarding sexual abuse at the doctor's office, I realized I had been molested as a child. After being gaslighted by numerous medical providers, I attended Save A Warrior in Newark, Ohio. Save a Warrior saved my life and set me on a path of emotional sobriety. I would not be here speaking if I did not attend Save a Warrior. SAW taught me the power in vulnerability. I have worked on my program continuously, practicing their warrior meditation for over 1300 days for 20 mins at each time. After much research, in 2023, I discovered the provider that molested me was still practicing and practicing at Altman Hospital in Canton, Ohio. I also discovered that the 2 of the 3

doctors I reported this were still practicing medicine at Akron Children's Hospital. I immediately filed reports with the nursing and medical board, and Canton Police department. When I telephoned the Canton Police Department, the officer I spoke with would not take my report and insisted I come to speak in person. I took 8 hours of leave from my employer, and drove to the Canton Police Department and spoke with an officer in person. I was given the report # of 2303686. The officer, badge #216, refused to give me a private room to give my statement and made me give my report in a public hallway. Since the person who molested me was actively practicing, I suffered the humiliation of making my report in public, surrounded by other police officers and individuals who had been charged and facing charges. I gave my statement because this was no longer about me and about the next boy this provider sees. I provided all my medical documentation, a statement, and previous medical records along with the name of a another boy in my class who claimed he had also seen this same provider. I did not speak with a detective. Around 3 months later, I got an email from a private investigator from the nursing board and an email from a medical board investigator wanting to speak with me regarding the complaints I had made. I spoke with both investigators from both boards. Each asked me " Why are you filing a complaint now?" which I found very offensive. I responded- "Because its no longer about me and about the next boy that these providers see that gets molested. Its about the next boy that reports being molested and they don't report. They represent a clear and present danger to the public in my view. That was over a year ago. I have not heard anything from either the nursing board or medical board regarding what

was done, if it was investigated, or if my complaint was taken seriously. I was told by a detective from Canton PD that 2920 Market Ave is outside of the cities jurisdiction and that I would have to file a complaint with the Stark County Sheriffs Office. I did file a report with them however it was impossible to get anything from the Sheriffs office. I could not even get a case number. I contacted the BCI's office that handles sexual assault cases because of the lack of information. The agent I spoke to was able to get my case re-opened. I received an email from the lead detective of the Stark County Sheriffs office that my case was open and being investigated. That was over 6 months ago. I have not heard anything. As far as I know, the person who molested me is still practicing medicine at Altman Hospital. The 2 providers I reported this abuse to are still practicing medicine. I understand that my case will not soon find resolution or justice- this process has shown me the lengthy, inefficient, cruel, impersonal broken path to resolution and justice victims have to go through. It is my hope is that this committee will vote to approve this bill and send it to the next stage of the legislative process for eventual full vote on the house floor. My hope is that the next boy who reports being molested will be believed, and that the medical board will investigate the matter, and be more open and transparent. That they will not have to face the same hurdles and gaslighting I did.

Thank you for allowing me to share my story. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.