

Proponent testimony , Janell Holloway, House Bill 183
October 18, 2023

Thank you Committee Chair Young, ranking member Miller and Higher Education Committee members. My name is Janell Holloway and I am here today to speak to you about a life-changing experience I had at our local YMCA in Xenia Ohio last year.

On September 26, 2022, after finishing up an afternoon swim at the Xenia YMCA, I entered the women's locker room to shower and change. As I approached my locker I shockingly realized that Darren Glines was sitting naked on a bench a few feet from me. I knew it was Darren because our family has known him since he was in the 5th grade. Darren was a classmate of one of our sons, he was on our high school tennis team that we coached and has been in our home several times. I immediately turned my back on him.

Standing, facing my locker and with my fumbling fingers trying to open my combination lock, I felt internal panic as I was trying to protect myself and get away from Darren. Darren breathed loudly and heavily and I honestly didn't know what was happening behind me.

I knew we were alone, so I quickly grabbed my belongings from my locker and hurried back to the shower stall where I had just hung my towel. There I stood in complete silence watching through a small crack in the door hoping he would not come towards me.

I was fearful for myself, but more fearful of another woman or girl who might enter the locker room and not know that a naked man was in there. Standing in that shower stall, I silently reassured myself that it was only me who was going to have this experience. In just a few minutes I could inform the YMCA staff so it could be quickly taken

care of in an appropriate manner. All I had to do was wait for Darren to dress and leave the locker room.

Immediately after the locker room encounter with Darren, my husband and I reported the incident to a Xenia YMCA staff member and were shocked to learn that for the past several months, Darren regularly used the women's locker room, with permission of YMCA staff.

I informed the staff of my 22 year history of a relationship with Darren and expressed concern about the dangers of allowing a 32 year old man to enter a women's locker room.

I was assured that the YMCA director would reach out to me soon. My husband and I left anticipating a call shortly from the director. After not receiving a call for a full day, my husband stopped by to speak with the director about locker room safety issues. The director of the YMCA was not concerned and told my husband that if I felt unsafe changing and showering with Darren Glines in the locker room, that I should use the family locker room.

Prior to September 26, 2022 I naively assumed the YMCA Women's Locker Room was a completely safe and private place for women only. However, my trust in YMCA leaders faded in the weeks following the frightful September incident as I began to realize that they had no interest in hearing from or assisting me. My husband and I were told by YMCA staff on several occasions to NOT make this a public matter. This contrasts the YMCA's membership documents, which assure members that incidents at the YMCA will be thoroughly investigated and acted upon.

During the fall of 2022 many women and girls started to come forward with reports of uncomfortable experiences in the locker room with Darren which they reported to police. The ripple effect of just one individual with predatory behavior can be traced back over time and it appears that Darren used women and girls to fuel his sexual addiction. We can now see just how many different families have been adversely affected.

Darrens targets included:

- Women like myself having actual uncomfortable encounters in the locker room,
- a YMCA employee who he allegedly grouped,
- a mom having to protect her teenage daughters from seeing Darren naked,
- a ten year old girl being in the women's locker room alone, without her parents, with Darren when he was naked,
- a high school swim-team having to alter their schedule and patterns and not use the locker room for their entire swim season to protect their athletes
- Many families dropping their YMCA memberships, deciding it's not worth the risks

The list keeps growing because no one has been willing to step up to protect women and girls.

In December of 2022, Darren was charged with three counts of indecent exposure and a bench trial occurred in Xenia on March 21,

2023. I was a witness at the trial and I cooperated fully with the prosecutor and instructions from the Court in the months leading up to the trial. It was a very awkward and uncomfortable experience, being escorted to the front of the courtroom approximately 10 feet away from Darren Glines, seeing him for the first time in months since the locker room incident, talking about my locker room experience while he was just staring at me a few feet away and not having to answer any questions at all.

On May 1st, 2023 Judge David McNamee ruled that Darren was innocent of indecent exposure because his body fat covered his genitals.

The judicial system failed me and all women and girls that day who use the YMCA locker room. The leadership of our YMCA discriminated against me as a woman and now a judge had just given his stamp of approval with his decision and seeming affirmation of men having full access to women's locker rooms at the YMCA. The following two days after the judge's ruling were two of the hardest days of my life. I felt an anger towards the judge and the leadership of the Y that I didn't even know I could feel. It felt like no one was willing to tell Darren Glines "NO!"

After several days of working through my anger and frustrations at the judge's decision, I decided I need to continue to speak out against the YMCA and the policies that put women and girls in our community in danger. Staying silent would be so much easier but I have 3 granddaughters in Xenia who are seven, five and four years old. They have all been in the locker room with me and would have never known to turn their back on Darren Glines.

After the trial in March, I wrote a lengthy letter to Darren for my victim/witness impact statement. I intended to have it read at a sentencing hearing to Darren, so that others who are in his life currently would know what I, his former tennis coach, wrote to him. I mailed the letter to him at the end of May and have not heard any response from him or know if Darren has even read my letter.

Sexual predators looking for ways to gain access to women and girls will use places like a YMCA and their “all-inclusive” policies to gain access to young girls. This is what Darren Glines was and could still be doing at our local YMCA’s.

Any male sexual predator or pedophile can now walk into a YMCA to gain free access to women and girls in a locker room. The Women’s sign on the door means nothing. I ask you to pass House Bill 183 to protect the safety of women and girls in the state of Ohio from the evil actions of predators and pedophiles who have access to them in women’s spaces, a place where women and girls are most vulnerable and need the highest levels of protection.

Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions