

SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

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COMMUNICATIONS

James Pollack Director (330) 643-8386 (330) 643-2137 Fax To: Ohio House Finance Committee Ohio Senate Finance Committee

Re: Ohio Crime Victim Justice Center Funding Support

To the Members of the Senate and House Finance Committees:

My name is Sherri Bevan Walsh. I am the elected prosecutor in Summit County and have served in this capacity for the past twenty-three years. During the course of my work as a prosecutor, I have collaborated with and advocated alongside of Ohio Crime Victim Justice Center ("OCVJC"). OCVJC is a statewide nonprofit that provides free legal representation and advocacy to crime victims to ensure their rights are protected during the criminal justice process.

I support funding for OCVJC because OCVJC's services to victims/survivors and outreach/education to justice professionals have been invaluable to my staff, the community, and the crime victims we collectively serve. My office and OCVJC have collaborated to serve Ohio crime victims. This includes but is not limited to, working together on the passage of Marsy's Law as well as the language implementation legislation (HB 343), the Victims Rights Toolkit and specific cases in my county where OCVJC supported victims whose rights were being violated.

For the past twenty years, OCVJC has been doing outstanding work, serving the entire state of Ohio, while facing serious funding challenges. The Victims of Crime Act funding cuts of recent years have left OCVJC with even fewer funds to carry out its mission. These cuts have come at a critical time for victims' rights in Ohio, following the passage of the Marsy's Law constitutional amendment and House Bill 343. I support state funding for OCVJC because it is now more critical than ever that victims of crime in our state have access to free, high quality legal representation to ensure that their constitutional and statutory rights are protected. I hope you will join me in supporting OCVJC.

Sincerely,

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SHERRI BEVAN WALSH Prosecuting Attorney