



174 E Long Street, Suite 200
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: 614-781-9651
www.odvn.org

**Senate Judiciary Committee
Proponent Testimony for HB 111
May 22, 2024**

Lisa DeGeeter, Esq.
Director of Systems Advocacy & Policy Counsel
Ohio Domestic Violence Network

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Lisa DeGeeter, and I am the Director of Systems Advocacy and Policy Counsel for the Ohio Domestic Violence Network. The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) is Ohio's federally designated domestic violence coalition, representing 76 local domestic violence organizations throughout the state. In calendar year 2023, ODVN programs sheltered 9,707 survivors, including 3,743 children, and provided 98,143 survivors and their children with housing, legal advocacy, and other supportive services.¹

ODVN appreciates the opportunity to provide support for HB 111, which increases the sentencing range for third-degree felony domestic violence offenses and establishes a presumption in favor of a prison term. A presumption of prison time can provide victims of domestic violence with the valuable gift of time to work with their local programs and shelters to establish long-term safety plans, particularly around financial security and safe housing. Many offenders choose to leverage economic stressors to further harm and control a partner, and this financial abuse can make it difficult for survivors to safely leave.

As domestic violence survivors endure the ongoing stress of inflation, they often turn to local programs for help. Advocates at ODVN's local programs are experts in helping survivors navigate these challenges every single day, but obtaining financial independence and permanent safe housing is a time-consuming process. In a recent survey of survivors conducted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, 72% of respondents reported that they stayed with their abuser longer because they couldn't afford to leave, and 23% of those surveyed had been homeless as a result of domestic violence.² In 2023, ODVN provided

¹ Available from https://www.odvn.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/ODVN_FactSheet_April2024.pdf

² NNEDV: 18th Annual Domestic Violence Counts Report. (2024). Available from <https://nnedv.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/18th-Annual-DV-Counts-Report-Full-Report-FINAL.pdf>



174 E Long Street, Suite 200
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: 614-781-9651
www.odvn.org

temporarily hotel stays to 1,248 survivors and 603 children with \$609,554 in funds and referrals from 60 of our member programs. Additionally, ODVN's relocation program helped 669 survivors and 928 children – a 43% increase in total number served from 2022 – with security deposits, rent, transportation, moving expenses, or utilities so they can move into permanent safe housing.³ HB 111 would give survivors more time to work with our local programs and shelters to establish a long-term safety plan, ensuring that they can rebuild their lives free from violence.

On behalf of the Ohio Domestic Violence Network and our 76 member programs, I would like to thank Representative LaRe and Representative Miller for their dedication to domestic violence victims. Every day, our programs across the state are working hard to help victims address barriers that arise in the process of finding safety. It is for these victims that we welcome and support measures like HB 111 that would create more safety nets for survivors.

³ 2022 Impact Report: ODVN Relocation and Safety Assistance. (2023). Available from [Impact-Sheet-for-Grants-2022.pdf \(odvn.org\)](http://www.odvn.org)