



Ohioans for Rational Sex Offense Laws

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House Bill 102
Written Opponent Testimony
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Chair Abrams, Vice-Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the House Public Safety Committee — Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 102.

I want to begin by saying that the constituent's story behind this bill is heartbreaking. No child should ever have to live in fear, and no parent should have to see their child retraumatized just by looking out their window. Every survivor's trauma is real, and every survivor deserves to feel safe. I understand exactly why a parent in that position would want a law like this. I would too if I were in their shoes.

I. Fairness Means Protecting ALL Survivors

HB 102 leaves most survivors unprotected because it focuses narrowly on one scenario. It creates only a symbolic boundary that will not reach most victims. The responsibility of this Public Safety Committee includes the safety of all survivors. HB 102 focuses only on survivors of sexual harm. Why are survivors of non-sexual offenses treated as if their pain matters less than survivors of sexual harm? If this committee believes proximity somehow predicates safety, then it has a moral obligation to include child victims of other crimes. A parent whose child barely survived after a 15-year-old neighbor gave them an illegal drug should have the right to ensure that person and their family are removed from their neighborhood. And what of the child survivor of a gun crime? Their trauma and safety are just as important, but this bill implies their safety and healing are less of a priority. Every survivor's pain deserves equal consideration, and every family deserves laws that protect them based on evidence, not emotion or category.

II. Constitutional Integrity and Real-World Consequences

The implementation of HB 102 will result in a recurrence of constitutional registry mistakes that have been previously addressed by the courts. First, this bill will never help this constituent's circumstances because this law is enacted after the individual's sentence and is ex post facto. Second, it raises due process concerns, particularly that it disempowers survivors and allows third parties to seek injunctions on behalf of survivors and imposes blanket restrictions without an individualized assessment of risk. We cannot protect survivors with laws that sidestep judicial integrity, because when the law is challenged and struck down, survivors lose. Is it this committee's willful intent that survivors are retraumatized by the very system meant to protect them?

III. One Size Does Not Fit All

And there is another side to this story that often goes unheard. Some family abuse survivors have chosen to reconcile, to co-parent, or to rebuild family ties. One Ohio father wrote:

“My adopted daughter was my identified victim in my case. After my conviction, my wife and I fought to regain custody of both our children — and succeeded. If this bill had been in place, I would have been breaking the law just by living in the same home with my daughter. The court gave us our family back. HB 102 would have taken it away again.”

This bill strips self-choice and autonomy from survivors and replaces healing with forced estrangement. Our responsibility here is not to respond to one family’s tragedy; it is to make sure our laws truly keep *all* families safe.

IV. Ineffective Policies Without Evidence Do Not Create Safety

Proponents claim that House Bill 102 is merely an extension of existing residency restrictions near schools or child-care centers. That comparison is inaccurate. Those earlier laws were not based on evidence of increased safety, and studies since their passage have shown they do not reduce re-offense. HB 102 repeats the same mistake. It builds on a failed premise rather than fixing it. Safety does not come from distance; it comes from stability. Research from Minnesota, Colorado, and peer-reviewed studies by Duwe (2009) and Levenson & Cotter (2005) found no connection between proximity and reoffense. Forcing people from stable housing makes supervision harder and communities less safe. If the goal is truly to protect survivors, we should strengthen monitoring, treatment, and accountability instead of expanding a model that has already proven ineffective.

V. Real Safety Comes from Stability, Treatment, and Accountability

The alternative to HB 102 is to strengthen Ohio’s existing legal framework to empower survivors with the protections they deserve. Our courts already have the ability to issue civil protection orders that are constitutional, individualized, and provide due process for both parties. Rather than creating a new, sweeping restriction, the state must improve access to these civil protection orders, make them easier to obtain in cases involving all harm, not just sexual harm, and ensure law enforcement has the resources to enforce them. This approach keeps the focus where it belongs on the individual situation and the survivor’s specific needs.

Our shared goals are public safety and healing, thus laws must be based on evidence, not emotion. Survivors deserve policies that stand up in court, deliver real protection, and can be adapted to their specific needs.

Thank you for your time and for your willingness to replace fear-filled, emotional decision making with rational evidence-based solutions.

Supporters and Signatories

The following individuals have joined in this testimony submitted to the Ohio House Public Safety Committee on behalf of Ohioans for Rational Sex Offense Laws (OHR SOL).

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