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**Senate Judiciary Committee  
Proponent Testimony for S.B. 225  
November 5, 2025**

Maria York, Policy Director  
Ohio Domestic Violence Network

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

My name is Maria York, and I am the Policy Director at the Ohio Domestic Violence Network. Thank you for the opportunity to provide support for S.B. 225, which expands Ohio's Safe at Home address confidentiality program to household members of victims of domestic violence and other crimes, including gun violence.

Shared housing can turn one offender's retaliation into multiple victims. In ODVN's 2023 domestic violence fatality report, an offender who owed child support committed arson at a shared residence where his victim lived. The victim was living with another mother and their children to combine resources. A child of the other mother, with no relation to the offender, was killed in the arson.<sup>1</sup> When an offender targets a home, every occupant is at risk. Allowing all current household members to use a protected substitute address creates a safety radius that protects children, roommates, and co-parents, while also protecting the original survivor.

Just last month, ODVN released our 10<sup>th</sup> annual domestic violence fatality report. Ohio recorded 157 domestic-violence fatalities from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, a 37% increase over the prior year.<sup>2</sup> Guns were used to kill in 144 of the 157 fatalities, or 84%. Forty murder-suicide cases accounted for 80 deaths.

In 69% of cases, victims had been involved with the criminal or civil justice systems, including divorce or custody proceedings. Fifty-five percent of suspected killers had a criminal history, 37% included felonies. Thirty-six children were present during a killing; the deaths left 92 minor children without one or both parents and at least 76 without a grandparent. Each homicide

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<sup>1</sup> *Second suspect pleads guilty to arson that killed Warren teen.* (2024). 21 WFMJ News. Available from <https://www.wfmj.com/story/50860299/second-suspect-pleads-guilty-to-arson-that-killed-warren-teen>

<sup>2</sup> Ohio Domestic Violence Fatalities. (2025). Ohio Domestic Violence Network. Available from [https://www.odvn.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/FatalityInfographic2025\\_web.pdf](https://www.odvn.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/FatalityInfographic2025_web.pdf)



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incident leaves behind families and co-survivors who might be facing immediate and long-term safety concerns.

After the homicide, surviving family members often return to those same systems for custody, probate, protection orders, or to follow the pending murder case. This places a heavy burden on families who are grieving and trying to stay safe. Extending address confidentiality to homicide co-survivors gives families a practical safety tool while they manage hearings, filings, and school or housing changes.

National research on homicide co-victims shows persistent fear, re-traumatization, and exposure to intimidation, including threats and harassment that target families navigating the justice process.<sup>3</sup> Ohio's own assessment of homicide co-survivors documents systemic gaps that heighten risk and re-traumatization. Families reported not being informed of their rights or victims' compensation, confusing reimbursement processes, poor communication, lack of referrals, and minimal support in murder-suicide cases. Many felt revictimized by the process and believed the offender's rights were given more weight than the victim's.<sup>4</sup>

S.B. 225 meets a clear safety need. It protects where families live, keeps courts and agencies connected to survivors and co-survivors through a substitute address, and prevents collateral harm to victims in shared households. On behalf of ODVN, thank you, Sen. Manchester, for championing S.B. 225 so families can heal with greater safety and more privacy.

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<sup>3</sup> Bastomski, Sara and Duane, Marina. Research Brief: Homicide Co-Victimization. (2018). Available from <https://ovc.ojp.gov/library/publications/research-brief-homicide-co-victimization>

<sup>4</sup> Trauma-Informed Services For Co-Victims Of Homicide: A Best Practice Guide for Criminal Justice Professionals and Allied Partners. (2023). Ohio Victim Witness Association. Available from [https://ovwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Best\\_Practices\\_2023\\_091923.pdf](https://ovwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Best_Practices_2023_091923.pdf)