Nickie J. Antonio
Minority Leader
23rd District

Nathan H. Manning
State Senator
13th District

Senate Judiciary Committee
Sponsor Testimony - Senate Bill 421
Senator Nickie J. Antonio and Senator Nathan H. Manning
April 15th, 2026

Thank you, Chair Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee, for allowing me to bring before you Senate Bill 421, legislation that would change the civil statute of limitations for sexual offenses.

Currently under the Ohio Revised Code, victims of sexual assault have only one year from the date that their offense occurred to file a civil lawsuit against their attackers. This legislation would extend the civil statute of limitations to 5 years, allowing significantly more time for survivors to file a lawsuit if they choose to do so.

According to The U.S Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey, it is estimated that "every 68 seconds someone is sexually assaulted in the United States".[1] Over half of women and almost one in three men have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact during their lifetime.[2] Additionally, the Ohio Incident Based Reporting System reports 3,858 incidents of rape in 2025.[3] As elected officials, it is our moral duty and responsibility to help protect our constituents against these heinous acts, particularly because sexual assault is severely underreported. Nearly 80% of sexual assaults were never reported to authorities in 2021.[4]

---

[1] Kaitlyn Rines, M.S, Charles Partridge, Ph.D, Nancy Radcliffe, B.A, C.A,,"*Sexual Assault in Ohio, 2016-2023*", (Ohio Department of Public Safety, Office of Criminal Justice Service), 5, https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/ocjs.ohio.gov/links/sexual-assault-report.pdf

[2] See note 1 above.

[3] Office of Criminal Justice Services - Ohio Incident Based Reporting System, "Crimes Reported by City, Township, Village Police Departments in 2025", accessed April 13th, 2026, https://dpsoibrspext.azurewebsites.net/?handler=Search

[4] Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence, "Helpful Data Points", last accessed April 13th, 2026, https://oaesv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Helpful-Data-Points.pdf

Sexual assault is a traumatic experience for any individual to go through. It can take a toll on one's physical, mental, and emotional health and often requires medical or mental health intervention. Trauma associated with any type of crime, especially sexual assault, can often delay reporting[5], which is why this legislation is so important. One year is simply not adequate time for victims of these violent crimes to process what has happened to them and choose if they would like to pursue legal action in any capacity.

I have spoken with survivors and advocates against sexual violence extensively about this issue and one thing has remained true: by the time a survivor has decided they would like to sue for financial damages, the current statute has run out, leaving them behind. We must demonstrate to survivors across our state that they are a priority by holding their perpetrators accountable for their actions.

While some survivors may not want to criminally press charges, the decision to file a civil lawsuit against anyone is a decision not to be taken lightly. Extending the civil statute of limitations to five years will allow survivors another avenue towards justice and redemption. This extended time period will allow them a longer time to heal and decide if a lawsuit is the right choice for them.

Thank you to all the committee members for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have at this time.

[5] Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, "Civil Statutes of Limitations for Sex Crimes: Reform Enables Justice", last accessed April 13th, 2026, https://rainn.org/rainns-recommendations-for-legislators/civil-statutes-of-limitations-for-sex-crimes-reform-enables-justice/