



Proponent testimony submitted to the Ohio House Judiciary Committee
S.B. 13: Rape/sexual battery – implicated by DNA evidence – extend statute of limitations
Becky Perkins, Communications Coordinator, Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence
May 19, 2015

Chair Butler, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Stinziano and members of the Ohio House Judiciary Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 13. As Ohio's statewide coalition, the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence advocates for comprehensive responses and rape crisis services for survivors and empowers communities to prevent sexual violence.

I want to thank the sponsors of this bill, Senators Jones and Hughes, and sponsors of companion legislation in the House, Representatives LaTourette and Kunze, as well as many other legislators and leaders who have championed this issue as a policy priority since S.B. 316 was signed into law in December 2014. S.B. 316 requires that law enforcement agencies submit new kits for testing within 30 days and submit previously untested kits and evidence within one year of enactment.

S.B. 13 would increase the criminal statute of limitations for rape and sexual battery five years, from 20 to 25 years and an additional five years to extend the statute in cases with DNA. According to the National Center for Victims of Crime, as of August 21, 2013, 27 states have some form of a DNA exception that extends the time limit for prosecuting the offense. Ohio should be the next state to join that list.

As of May 1, 2015, 170 law enforcement agencies have submitted 9,643 kits to be tested as part of the Ohio Attorney General's Office Sexual Assault Kit Testing Initiative. Of those, 308 kits were submitted after the effective date of Senate Bill 316. As of May 1, 2015, forensic scientists have completed testing on a total of 7,211 of those kits, resulting in 2,692 hits in the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). In Cuyahoga County alone, more than 300 defendants have been indicted following DNA testing conducted as part of the effort, including Van Patterson, 43, who was arrested last month. Patterson was indicted for three sexual assaults he allegedly committed in 1995, 1997, and 2009.

The majority of rapists are serial offenders who not only commit multiple rapes, but also commit other types of offenses. Allowing additional time to prosecute these offenders will promote public safety and justice for multiple crime victims. Yet, even if an offender commits one sexual assault, that one victim deserves every opportunity for justice. S.B. 13 is an important part of that pursuit of justice for survivors of rape in Ohio.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 13, and I am available for any questions from committee members.