

Ohio House Judiciary Committee  
Tuesday, May 19, 2015  
Substitute Senate Bill 13 – Proponent Testimony

Rape is one of the most violent and vicious crimes that can be committed against a person – male or female. It is all about power and control, not sexual pleasure. Only victims and survivors can truly understand the impact of the trauma and its long-term effects. But it also impacts persons close to the victim – husbands and wives, children and parents – by decreasing their sense of safety and well being, as well as creating anxiety and concerns about the emotional and physical health of their loved one, who was assaulted.

68% of sexual assaults are not reported to police.\* There are many different reasons why victims do not report the crime – such as fear that law enforcement and others won't believe them and fear of retaliation by the rapist if he is known to the victim (and most are).

Victims may not seek medical care, because they can't imagine enduring physical examination and evidence collection following the assault. They may fear that someone will try to force them to report the crime, or that someone else will attempt to make the report for them, reinforcing their sense of powerlessness

Victims who do go to the hospital for an exam may also not want to file a police report, because it could lead to weeks, months and even years of contact with the criminal justice system and endless repetitions of re-telling their story of the crime.

With the improvements and refinements in DNA analysis, more and more rapists have been identified, arrested and charged with the crime, but victims and survivors play the critical role in making that happen. In addition, law enforcement, DNA analysts and prosecutors must all be ready and able to support and respond appropriately to victims. It's a team effort to achieve justice.

Because Ohio's statute of limitations for rape is currently 20 years and because law enforcement agencies developed large backlogs of untested rape kits over the years, many strong and courageous rape victims who agreed to file a charge have not received justice. Now with the Ohio Attorney General's campaign to test old rape kits and mandate timely testing of new kits, long term rapists are being identified but some offenders have beat the system by evading identification and prosecution within the current 20-year statute.

On behalf of ACTION OHIO Coalition For Battered Women, I applaud the sponsors of Substitute Senate Bill 13 for proposing to extend the statute of limitations for rape from 20 to 25 years and for giving an additional 5 years for prosecution of the rapist when his DNA evidence can be matched and identified to a person in the criminal justice system.

With the passage of Substitute Senate Bill 13, many victims and survivors will have a better chance to get their day in court and know that their rapist will receive the punishment he deserves for his crimes. Please support passage of this bill.

\*RAINN – Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network

Phyllis L Carlson-Riehm, Executive Director  
ACTION OHIO Coalition For Battered Women  
5900 Roche Drive, Suite 445, Columbus OH 43229  
[actionohio@wowway.biz](mailto:actionohio@wowway.biz) - 614 825-0551

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