



Senate Bill 214 Opponent Testimony
Submitted to the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
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Chair Coley, Vice Chair Seitz, Ranking Member Yuko and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, my name is Katie Hanna and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV). 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 am testifying in opposition of Senate Bill 214. OAESV is particularly concerned with the following language in the bill:

(B) The department of health shall ensure that all funds it receives through the Violence Against Women Act to distribute as grants for the purpose of education and prevention of violence against women are not used to do any of the following:

- (1) Perform nontherapeutic abortions;*
- (2) Promote nontherapeutic abortions;*
- (3) Contract with any entity that performs or promotes nontherapeutic abortions;*
- (4) Become or continue to be an affiliate of any entity that performs or promotes nontherapeutic abortions.*

Ohio Revised Code defines *nontherapeutic abortion* as “an abortion that is performed or induced when the life of the mother would not be endangered if the fetus were carried to term or when the pregnancy of the mother was not **the result of rape or incest reported to a law enforcement agency.**”

- **The majority of sexual assaults, an estimated 63%, are never reported to the police.**¹
- **At least 1-5% of sexual assaults result in pregnancy.**²

¹ Rennison, C.A. (2002). Rape and sexual assault: Reporting to police and medical attention, 1992-2000 [NCJ 194530]. Retrieved from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/rsarp00.pdf>.

² Holmes, M.M., et al. (1996). Rape-related pregnancy: Estimates and descriptive characteristics from a national sample of women. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 175(2): 320-25.

- In 2008, the Supreme Court of California upheld that pregnancy resulting from rape constitutes great bodily injury.³
- Adolescent girls who experience intimate partner violence are 4-6 times more likely to become pregnant than girls in non-abusive relationships.⁴
- 40% of pregnant women in abusive relationships report their pregnancy was unintended, as opposed to only 8% of women in non-abusive relationships.⁵

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), enacted in 1994, recognizes the insidious and pervasive nature of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and supports comprehensive, effective and cost saving responses to these crimes. VAWA programs, administered by the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, give law enforcement, prosecutors and judges the tools they need to hold offenders accountable and keep communities safe while supporting victims. VAWA funded programs administered by the Ohio Department of Health work to prevent and respond to violence against women. These staff are experts in working with local communities in Ohio to ensure access to programs and services.

I urge you to vote against this bill. VAWA provides life-saving services to the more than 743,000 adult women survivors of rape in Ohio. Placing additional restrictions on this funding in Ohio limits the accessibility of Ohioans to access sexual violence prevention and response services and puts the lives of women at greater risk. Survivors need access to services, not more barriers.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. While I am not available in person today for testimony, I am available for questions at khanna@oaesv.org or 216-658-1381 ext. 125.

³ People v. Cross, 45 Cal. 4th 58 (2008).

⁴ Silverman, J.G., Raj, A., & Clements, K. (2004). Dating violence and associated sexual risk and pregnancy among adolescent girls in the United States. *Pediatrics*, 114 (2), e220-225.

⁵ Hathaway, J.E., Mucci, L.A., Silverman, J. G., Brooks, D.R., Mathews, R., & Pavlos, C.A. (2000). Health status and health care use of Massachusetts women reporting partner abuse. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 19 (4), 318-321.