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Brett Hudson Hillyer State Representative

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chairman Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 249.

Ohio State University hired Dr. Strauss as an attending physician and assistant professor in 1978. By 1981, Ohio State gave Dr. Strauss the authority to serve as team physician for 14 different team sports at the University and he also served as a part-time physician with Ohio State's Student Health Services from July 1, 1994 to August 7, 1996 giving him access to even more students.

At the beginning of the athletic season for each of the 14 teams under Dr. Strauss' control, all athletes were required to have a physical examination. Dr. Strauss used these exams as an opportunity to sexually abuse hundreds of students by holding, fondling, and playing with their genitalia. He continued his pattern of sexual abuse, without reprimand, until June 30, 1998, when he retired from the University with Emeritus status.

In April 2018, nearly forty years after the first victim of Dr. Strauss complained in 1979, the Ohio State University publicly announced that it was investigating accusations that Strauss sexually abused athletes when he was the team doctor. In September 2018, with its investigation still incomplete, the university filed legal papers asking the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio to dismiss litigation by the victims and deny them their right to justice, all based on a waivable technicality of law, the statute of limitations.

The statute of limitations is intended to cut off claims where the evidence grows stale over time as documents get lost and memories fade. This is not such a case. The documents exist to prove that OSU knew about Dr. Strauss' actions and did nothing to stop him. The vivid abuse is seared into the memories of these young men. There is no doubt what happened and that it was preventable. The harm is immeasurable. Relationships have been destroyed, dreams broken, and PTSD and depression are common. And now it's impacting another generation – because the sons and daughters of Dr. Strauss' victims have become victims, too.

House Bill 249 will provide a very narrow window for survivors of Dr. Richard Strauss's sexual abuse to seek justice and begin the healing process. Without this legislation, they are likely barred by the state statute of limitations from holding accountable those responsible for enabling decades of sexual abuse. Join us in providing these survivors access to justice.

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chairman Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 249, and I am glad to answer any questions.