

Hello, my name is Pelagia Kilgore and my husband, Kent Kilgore, was a sexual assault victim of Dr Richard Strauss while attending OSU as a swimmer-athlete.

Ladies and Gentlemen-understand this is a difficult and personal subject to speak about.

My husband's pain is real, and his life choices and decisions have been directly affected by his experience of sexual abuse during **mandatory-athletic** physicals at OSU by Dr. Richard Strauss.

As a result of Strauss's abuse and OSU's negligence, my husband has multiple health problems, no male friends and has been unable to trust or show affection.

**WE are living in the harm and malice of OSU's lack of concern toward student safety and Richard Strauss's sexual deviancies toward young, innocent, male athletes. We are now paying the price for OSU's indifference to Strauss's sexual deviancies.**

A little background to understand the harm OSU & Richard Strauss has caused *our* family.

I knew Kent for over 20 years prior to our marriage. Throughout our friendship/courtship, each time Kent would get "too close" to me he would disappear for months. Once I did not see or hear from him for over a year.

He was an enigma. One day he was an advocate for senior citizens, children, and lost puppies- the next he was angry and cynical. His trust issues were vast and when I would ask him why- he would dismiss my question- and if I persisted, he would disappear for days- sometimes months.

Through our time together, I also noticed Kent would avoid friendships (especially Male) at all costs. EX: Kent not only refuses to shower at our gym but will *not even* use the restrooms there- as to avoid ALL or any situation where he could be left alone for any period of time with other males.

This behavior is far from gone... just last week while dropping off my mother at her home (4 minutes away). My male cousin unexpectedly dropped by (they have known each other for over 9 years). Kent called me-panic in his voice- and asked me to come home as quickly as possible- as this unexpected visit was causing him extreme anxiety. Please understand this not an isolated event-these panic attacks are real and frequent.

On a more personal level, my husband has also avoided emotional/support contact with our son- Kent is emotionally stunted due to his abuse by Strauss during his time at OSU. Last year was the first time (yes first) Kent hugged our son after he received an honor at school. Our son is 15 years old.

Kent also has frequent, erratic outbursts - ex: one time he smashed the remote control for no reason— then walked away upset with his actions and lack of understanding on how to change/control these fits of rage. He recently admitted to my son and I the underlying reasons to his erratic behavior – they are triggered by flash backs of his abuse at OSU by Richard Strauss.

These types of behaviors have led to much emotional distress for our family and consequently we are all in family and personal therapy.

Refusal to have male friends...unable to be alone in the same room with any male, lack of emotional support to our son and frequent outbursts are just a few negative behaviors brought on upon by Strauss and OSU's negligence .

Kent's abuse via OSU & Strauss have also cost him his health. He suffers from severe high blood pressure, syncopes, ulcers and level 4 PTSD. (amongst other things...)

After several forced doctors' visits to a urologist for a situation Kent could no longer ignore **after 26 years**, I learned I must bring him an extra shirt to change (he would sweat through the 1<sup>st</sup> shirt while waiting for the doctor), I learned, Kent could not be alone with any male doctor (thus we both must take off work for his appts). I must be attentive and take notes of the appointment as Kent remembers **nothing** of the visit (he blocks it out completely).

I must hold his hand, comfort **and** distract him until the doctor arrives as well as during the visit. I must call the day before each doctor visit to remind the doctor/staff to be timely and not make him wait long or he **WILL** walk out.

***And Finally, I learned the examination room reminds him of the same room he was sexually abused in at OSU's mandatory athletic physicals by Richard Strauss.***

I will never forget the day Kent's heart doctor pulled up his chair inches from my husband's face. He told my husband "I don't know what is triggering your high blood pressure - but if you can't control it or figure it out – you're gonna die."

This real story is one family's example of the harm OSU has caused by not listening to student complaints, by not acting on what is the right thing to do by not stopping Richard Strauss from sexually abusing innocent students on OSU's campus.

No one at Ohio State University took accountability. No one acted. No one stopped the abuse.

As a 25-year math professor, embedded in education and higher learning, I understand the need for colleges and universities to protect their students from harm. I am disgusted by OSU's lack of action and empathy to protect their students and at their blatant approval to help a sexual predator (Richard Strauss) prey upon their innocent OSU family for decades!

Make no mistake Richard Strauss as well as OSU is to blame us for the harm that was done to my family and many other families.

All higher educational institutions including OSU have a responsibility to protect students and athletes from harm and OSU's lack of oversight and diligence cost hundreds of students and athletes and their family's decades of pain and suffering.

If only one professor, coach, or administrator had acted upon the multiple complaints filed by multiple OSU athletes and students against Dr. Richard Strauss none of this would've happened and we would not be here today asking for justice and change.

Remember, OSU (and all higher educational institutions) have the implied responsibility to take care of their athletes and students after their semester enrollment, books and services are paid for.

All students matter not just the money, honors and athletic accolades they bring to the university or the university's reputation.

Please help us correct what should have never happened and support House Bill 249.

Thank you Representative Hillyer and this committee for holding this hearing and listening to **our** voices and **our** real stories. But please don't just listen – act – act now and help these men before it is too late.