

Dear Chairman Hambley and the Civil Justice Committee Members,

My name is Sonia Walker. I am a wife and the mother of 3 student athletes, one of whom will be starting college this fall. John Doe 32 reached out to me yesterday to ask me to read his wife's victim impact statement in support of HB 249. After hearing about their experience, it was easy for me to understand her reluctance to speak, which is why I am here before you today. Here is her statement:

Dear Ohio Civil Justice Committee members,

How can our largest University allow the worst sexual abuse scandal go on for so long, and then allow all of these brave men to be dragged through the mud. These men have been ostracized, criticized, threatened, mocked and questioned by their peers. As a mother of four, it's unfathomable that a monster could prey on kids for so long. I am at a loss for words, why are these people not in jail? Why did people not lose their jobs? Why are people receiving pensions when they turned a blind eye? OSU is dismissive and claims they are a different University, **Liers**. Between 2014 and 2017, 57 students at OSU were victims of sexual assault. Astonishingly, the victims were told by "OSU sexual assault counselors" that details of their sexual assaults were unbelievable, that they were lying, and their cases were not reported to the proper authorities. The employees directly involved were fired after pressure to do so. Their supervisors and the president of OSU should also be held accountable.

I am the wife of John Doe 32, after your committee heard my husband's victim statement several months ago you can understand why he would prefer not to share his name at this time. My husband is a proud strong man, son of a marine. Not until summer of 2018 did he share any information regarding being raped by Doctor Strauss. Not until last week did he share the full details of the sexual abuse by Doctor Strauss with me. He could not share it verbally so he handed me to his victim statement. Here is his horrific story:

"I am a long-time resident of Ohio. Over 30 years ago, I attended The Ohio State University and was a member of two varsity athletic teams. In many ways, my dedication to both sports began with my mother. She always enjoyed attending my sports meets and competitions when I was in high school. When I learned, at age 16, that she was dying of cancer, I dedicated the hard work that went into those sports to her. I was determined to make her proud.

Initially, Ohio State offered the best of both worlds for a young man with dreams of being a star athlete: I was given a partial scholarship to OSU to join the wrestling team and another varsity sport. I enjoyed great success in both sports during my freshman year. Then my mother passed away. I was 18, crushed, and struggling to deal with losing my mom.

I decided to work even harder, probably to distract myself from my grief. But I began what I now know was an overly aggressive weight training regimen. I wasn't drinking enough fluids, and I developed what I thought was a kidney infection. I was in a lot of pain and went to the training room at Larkins Hall to get treatment. After seeing how sick I looked, the trainers asked Dr. Strauss to help me.

Dr. Strauss made me sit and wait to see him. It seemed like forever. He made me wait until everyone else in the training room was gone. He then approached me and gave me what he said was pain medication, as he walked me from the training room to the locker

room. By the time Dr. Strauss began to examine me, I was groggy and felt like I was going to pass out. What happened next, though, was so disturbing that it is impossible to forget.

Dr. Strauss instructed me to pull my pants down. Then he pulled up a chair and sat with his face directly in my groin. He began to poke around my lower stomach and genitals, and seemed especially focused on my genitals. Then he began to pull on my penis repeatedly. That's when he asked, "Does this hurt?" I kept asking – louder and more persistent each time – "What are you doing?" Finally he stopped. And then I passed out.

I'm not sure how long I was out, but I eventually woke up face down on the ground because of unbearable rectal pain. As I came to, I realized the pain was because Dr. Strauss was lying behind me, anally raping me. Then in a creepy, high-pitched voice, Dr. Strauss asked, "Are you okay?"

I was still foggy, but I remember like it was yesterday that there was blood. Lots of blood. I reached behind me, and when I pulled my hands back, I saw only blood. I then looked at Dr. Strauss and saw his bloody penis. I am haunted, to this day, by the image of all the blood. I was shocked and scared, in tremendous pain, and didn't know what to do.

The next day I told my head wrestling coach what happened. He accused me of lying and we had a very loud argument about it. He demeaned me, argued with me, and only because of my insistence finally said that he would "take care of it." What happened, instead, was that he blacklisted me.

The following year, the same head wrestling coach no longer allowed me to wrestle. Another coach, realizing that something terrible was going on, required me to get a mental health evaluation. I started drinking – a lot – and my life was out of control. I also developed an eating disorder. And then OCD. And then anxiety. The repercussions of Dr. Strauss's rape kept snowballing and getting worse and worse. Yet no one at OSU actually bothered to "take care of it." Instead, as we now know, they allowed Dr. Strauss to continue abusing students. Despite numerous students coming forward and reporting their own experiences to OSU employees, nothing was done.

I look into my husband's once strong eyes and I see a lost soul and devastation, my heart is hurting for him. My emotions are racing faster than any time in my life. Our difficulty in our marriage in the last year and a half makes complete sense now. Ever since he shared his story with OSU's investigative group, he has been completely distant and an emotional wreck. My husband bravely reported his horrific experience with Dr. Strauss at the time it happened. Because of OSU's lack of response, he has alone shouldered this burden and shame for years. I will stand by him and help him recover, I'm not sure what the future will bring but, we will get through this. I appreciate the Civil Justice Committee for your time.

Shame on OSU of the past, and shame on OSU of the present for treating your students and student/athletes that were sexually assaulted and raped by your employee, like bothersome liabilities on your ten billion dollar annual budget. OHIO needs to hold OSU accountable. Otherwise, the abuse of our kids will continue.

Please help us,
Loving wife of John Doe 32