



Senate Bill 162 – Proponent Testimony
Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee
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Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for having me here today to speak in support of Senate Bill 162, which would eliminate the statute of limitation for rape in the state of Ohio. My name is Jane Bryan, and I am a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) at Cleveland Clinic Akron General.

In 2015, Cleveland Clinic Akron General opened the doors to its PATH Center, which stands for Providing Access To Healing. The PATH Center provides quality, trauma-informed, compassionate care to victims of rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, elder abuse, neglect, and dating violence for Summit and surrounding counties. The center is staffed by professionals – such as myself – who are trained in the systematic collection of evidence in an atmosphere of support and compassion.

The PATH Center, developed in conjunction with Cleveland Clinic Akron General's OB/GYN and Emergency Medicine Departments, uses a recognized standard of care for addressing these victims as set forth in the SANE program. As a Cleveland Clinic hospital, Akron General's PATH Center serves as the Clinic's southern SANE program location, with Hillcrest Hospital servicing the east side and Fairview Hospital servicing the west side.

I, along with 28 other nurses at Cleveland Clinic Akron General, have been trained to become a SANE nurse. This certification requires rigorous training and ongoing monitoring to ensure the appropriate care and proper evidence collection for survivors of sexual assault and rape. SANE examiners are also educated on the judicial aspects of sexual assault, and may be called upon to actively participate in the criminal trials against the perpetrators.

In 2019, Cleveland Clinic Akron General has had over 900 patients (whom we refer to as survivors) come through the PATH Center. So far in 2020, we have cared for over 90 survivors. More than 50 evidence collection kits have been turned over to law enforcement this past year. Since 2016, we've had over 50 subpoenas involving our kits.

My desire to work with sexual assault victims stems from observing the trauma and persistent challenges that my mother faced as a victim of an extremely violent sexual assault.

In the early morning hours of June 29, 1991 in Akron, my mother, 33-year-old Mary Ellen Bryan, was lying in her bed when a man appeared in the doorway. Before she could react, he jumped on top of her and covered her face with a blanket so she was unable to identify him as he raped her, both anally and vaginally. Prior to leaving, the man threatened her life with a gun, all while myself and my three younger siblings were in the next room.



The effects from this event on my mother and my family have been profound. My family made numerous attempts to learn the identity of my mother's attacker before the statute of limitations expired. I personally called the Akron police department in 2011 to see what became of my mother's rape kit, but I was told it was destroyed.

We ultimately learned the identity of the man who assaulted my mother after detectives uncovered my mother's rape kit, which was miraculously found wedged between a wall and a shelf in the police station. The match was made in September 2014 (23 year after the attack), and we learned that my mother's attacker was a serial rapist from Akron, presently serving a prison term on charges of domestic violence, gun and drugs. He is scheduled for release from prison in 2022.

Under the current laws, the man who violently raped my mother cannot be prosecuted for his crimes. The harm caused by rape crimes extends well beyond the current statute of limitations period of 20 years. My family has been haunted by this sexual assault for the past 28 years.

I am encouraged the Ohio legislature is now considering abolishing the statute of limitations for rape crimes. Our current statute of limitations on rape simply closes the door too soon on prosecuting some of the most dangerous people in Ohio. Our current statute of limitations ignores the fact that advances in forensics will sometimes lead to discovering the identity of the person whom committed a sexual assault after the current statute of limitations expired. This is exactly what happened in my mother's case.

Because of the trauma my family experienced from my mother's sexual assault and the suffering that I witness sexual assault victims experience through my profession, I am hopeful that we can ensure that all victims of sexual assault can receive the support and justice that they deserve.

Cleveland Clinic is thankful to the sponsors, Senator Antonio and Senator O'Brien. We are grateful that they have recognized that is time that Ohio joins the 16 other states in the country that have already eliminated the statute of limitation on rape.

Once again, as a leading healthcare organization committed to helping victims of sexual assault, the Cleveland Clinic voices its support for the passage of SB 162. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.