

51st House District

Portions of Butler County, including Hamilton and Fairfield, Ross Township and portions of Fairfield, Hanover and St. Clair townships

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Sara P. Carruthers
Ohio State Representative

Committees

-Behavioral Health & Recovery Supports (Chair)-
-Finance-
-Families, Aging & Human Services-

Commissions/Councils/Boards

-Commission on Infant Mortality-
-Early Childhood Advisory Council-
-Ohio Children's Trust Fund-
-Ohio Arts Council-

House Bill 3 Sponsor Testimony **House Criminal Justice Committee** **February 25, 2021**

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chairman Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak on House Bill 3. I am happy to join with my joint sponsor, Representative Boyd, on this important legislation.

House Bill 3 will make meaningful strides to protect victims of domestic violence and prevent these tragedies from occurring. I would like to emphasize the clear and urgent need to protect Ohioans from domestic violence by adopting into law the provisions Representative Boyd described in her speech. We can agree that all Ohioans deserve to feel safe in their homes and communities. For victims of domestic violence, however, that sense of security is shattered, as they are left to pick up the pieces of their lives while constantly living in fear of another incident.

Incidents of domestic violence occur in every corner of Ohio, and in far greater numbers than are often realized. In 2018, the Ohio Attorney General reported there were a staggering 38,475 domestic violence incident (DVI) charges in the state of Ohio; Butler County, which I represent, had 1,112 DVI charges. The Dove House, Butler County's only domestic violence shelter, reported they have served 187 victims since January, which is a dramatic increase. Butler County is not alone. Domestic violence truly does impact every county and every community in our state, especially during the pandemic.

On a personal level, I was honored to be asked to join Representative Boyd in sponsoring this legislation, as my own mother was abused by her second husband. After their brief marriage ended, he stalked her on her way home from work, pulled up next to her in his car, hit her with a tire iron, threw her in the car, and raped her. She escaped, but her lawyer told her to move to the top floor of the YWCA for her own safety and that of her family. Imagine not being able to be in your family's home because someone could harm all of you. Thankfully, my mother got out of this dangerous situation and met my father. Far too many individuals, however, continue to be abused and live in fear – constantly looking over their shoulders, worrying about when the next time will be and trying to hide it from the outside world. That is why it is so critical that we pass House Bill 3, to make Ohio a safer place and to let victims know that we care about them and that there is hope.

Chairman LaRe and committee members, thank you for your time on this important issue and we would be happy to answer any questions.