



Testimony in Support of HB3

To address: Making changes to civil and criminal law regarding domestic violence;

Address State Highway Patrol arrest authority; Name the act Aisha’s Law; and, to make an appropriation

Sponsors: Representative Boyd and Representative Carruthers

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 3, legislation that would amend sections 109.744, 109.803, 2903.01, 2919.25, 2919.27, 2929.12, 2929.13, 2929.14, 2929.22, 2935.03, 2935.032, 2937.23 and 3113.31; to amend, for the purpose of adopting a new section number as indicated in parentheses, section 2935.033 (2935.034); and to enact new section 2935.033 and section 2919.261 of the Revised Code to make changes to civil and criminal law regarding domestic violence, to address State Highway Patrol arrest authority, to name the act Aisha’s Law, and to make an appropriation.

The International Association of Forensic Nurses is an international membership organization comprised of forensic nurses and other professionals who support the healthcare response to those affected by violence.. The IAFN consists of over 6,500 members, of those members 263 are located in Ohio. Forensic nurses are Registered or Advanced Practice nurses who have received specific education and training. Forensic nurses routinely provide specialized care for patients who have experienced acute and long-term health consequences associated with victimization or violence, or have unmet evidentiary needs relative to having been victimized or accused of victimization.

Domestic violence is a public health issue which impacts healthcare systems and communities worldwide. Forensic nurses are the first responders for victims of violence and aim to raise awareness and promote interventions which prevent or confront the causes of violence and strengthen the health care response to those affected by violence [1, 2, 3]. Strangulation has been identified as one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence. Forensic nursing programs across Ohio have nurses on call 24/7 to perform a medical forensic examination when survivors of strangulation present to the hospital for treatment, seek services from advocacy, or report. Survivors of strangulation report neck pain, voice changes and hoarseness in their voice, difficulty swallowing, bruising on their neck or behind their ears, ringing in the

ears, dizziness, drooling, difficulty breathing, nausea and vomiting, incontinence, seizure, loss of memory, confusion, and agitation. It is imperative for anyone who has been strangled to receive medical treatment. Often there are no immediate outward signs or symptoms after strangulation. Internal injuries could potentially cause swelling, difficulty breathing, and even a stroke-like symptoms[6]. Violence is a healthcare issue that destroys the quality of life in societies and communities worldwide. The aftermath of violence creates complex health issues requiring the dedicated efforts of professionals. Nursing professionals are ethically bound to promote health, welfare, and safety of all people [2, 3]., Using a combination of nursing and forensic science, in conjunction with a solid public health foundation, forensic nurses are uniquely qualified to conduct a thorough head to toe assessment, formulate a nursing diagnosis, provide and recommend treatment within their scope, monitor the health and well-being, provide education, evaluate individual and family needs, and intervene for persons of all ages affected by violence, minimizing the short and long-term effects of violence [1]. Healthy People 2010 supports health care services, which focus on both treatment and prevention for all members of the global community [4]. Much research is needed to learn the long-term consequences of strangulation and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Laws in Ohio currently do not support domestic violence survivors who have been victims of strangulation. Offenders are likely to receive little to no punishment when charged with a misdemeanor for strangling the victim, which increases the lethality level for survivors. "Strangulation is, in fact, one of the best predictors for the subsequent homicide of victims of domestic violence. One study showed that the odds of becoming an attempted homicide victim increased by 700 percent, and the odds of becoming a homicide victim increased by 800 percent for women who had been strangled by their partner" [5]. Ohioans are requesting your help to modify current laws that reflect the seriousness of non-fatal strangulation. These amendments and additions to the domestic violence law will save lives and send a clear message to offenders that there is serious punishment associated with the violent acts of domestic violence and strangulation.

The Ohio Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses is thankful to the sponsors, Representative Boyd and Representative Carruthers. We are grateful they have recognized that it is time Ohio joins the 49 other states in the country that have recognized the seriousness of non-fatal strangulation and the long-term effects on survivors of domestic violence.

The Ohio Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses expresses its support for the passage of HB3. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

International Association of Forensic Nurses -- Ohio Chapter
Government Affairs Committee

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 5. Nancy Glass et al., Non-Fatal Strangulation Is an Important Risk Factor for Homicide of Women, 35 J. Emergency Med. 329 (2008).
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