

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.

I am writing to you regarding House Bill 3. As a Chemical Dependency Counselor and Art Therapist in training, I have seen firsthand the detrimental ripple effect that domestic violence has on the well-being of women, children, families, and communities. To stay educated on issues effecting clients, I have attended several seminars addressing strangulation, and was saddened to discover that Ohio is one of two remaining states who have not made strangulation a felony.

House Bill 3 would help protect women from not just the horrible suffering from strangulation (the brain damage I have seen firsthand in women I know has resulted in lifelong impairment), but also would protect them from being killed by the strangulation perpetrator. Women (who make up the overwhelming majority of cases) who have been strangled are at extremely high risk for a later attack to result in her death. For this reason, House Bill 3 could be considered an anti-homicide bill.

Not passing this bill through the Ohio House would send a message to all of Ohio's female constituents that their safety is not important to their representatives, and that their lives are being treated as of less value. This message, of and in itself, contributes to mental health issues and exacerbates domestic violence on all levels.

Currently, for someone to be charged for strangulation, they would need to commit this crime twice to receive a felony domestic violence charge. This means that when a woman is strangled, she is at the mercy of her attacker and at high risk of being killed by the next attack.

As a female constituent in Ohio, I am pleading with you to do what is right and support House Bill 3, as an act of protection for women's bodies and minds, respect for women's voices, and to save Ohio from the reputation of being the last state to make strangulation a felony.

Thank you for your time,

Ursula Messina