



Proponent Party testimony on Sub. House Bill 110
Ohio Finance Committee
Rosa Beltré, Executive Director
Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence
April 13, 2021

Chair Oelslager, Vice-Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Crawley, and Members of the Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 110. As Ohio's statewide coalition, the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV) advocates for comprehensive responses and rape crisis services for survivors and empowers communities to prevent sexual violence. On behalf of Ohio's 34 rape crisis programs, thank you for including a significant increase to Ohio's rape crisis center line item in Sub. H.B. 110.

Since the legislature prioritized funding for rape crisis centers in 2014 through creation of the Rape Crisis Center Fund, state support has sustained services amid devastating federal cuts, even as we have seen major increases in sexual violence and survivors seeking services. This was especially true in 2020 when rape crisis centers received more than \$8 million in Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) cuts, while simultaneously facing a 34% monthly increase¹ in hotline calls and a 50% monthly increase in survivors accessing advocacy during the pandemic.

Because of the federal cuts, rape crisis programs have been forced to make extremely difficult decisions to lay off staff and cut services. Further, we have been told to prepare for an additional 34% reduction in VOCA funds this year.

I'd like to thank the members of this committee that supported the Sub. Bill increase, without which the impact of additional 2021 VOCA cuts will be far more catastrophic. We respectfully ask this Committee and the Ohio House to support **an additional increase to the Rape Crisis Center line**, allowing centers to continue to address the needs of survivors of sexual assault. This increase would help to further offset additional federal cuts and support salaries and ancillary costs for additional advocacy in unserved counties and to meet the escalating demand for services in counties with existing programs. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request. I am happy to answer any questions you may have via email at rbeltre@oaesv.org.