

# **YWCA IS ON A MISSION**

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Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee  
SB 90 Proponent Testimony  
Tuesday, June 22, 2021**

Chair Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 90, which would expand the offense of domestic violence to include strangulation or suffocation.

Sponsored by Senators Kunze and Antonio, SB 90 prohibits any person from knowingly impeding the normal breathing or circulation of the blood of a family or household member by applying pressure to the throat or neck, or by blocking the nose and mouth. This prohibition will bring strangulation and suffocation to the same level as other domestic violence offenses including the prison sentences associated with those offenses. We know that strangulation presents a serious risk, and it deserves to be treated as such under the law.

One in four women will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime. Of those who do, nearly 68 percent will experience strangulation at the hands of their partner. Strangulation causes damage to the victim's throat resulting in difficulty breathing, swallowing, coughing, and talking. It can result in losing consciousness within seconds and death within a few minutes. It can also result in long-term neurological damage including memory loss, dizziness, headaches, and extreme weakness. Many survivors also experience PTSD, depression, and anxiety, and are at a higher risk factor for intimate-partner homicide in the future.

Despite this damage, strangulation only results in visible injuries about half the time and only 15 percent of cases involve injuries clear enough to photograph. This does not mean the damage was any less severe. This bill addresses that issue by not requiring visible injury to prosecute.

As the only provider of domestic violence shelters in Montgomery and Preble counties, YWCA Dayton is driven by a mission to empower women and prioritizes supporting women who are survivors of gender-based violence. YWCA Dayton provides 24/7, year-round shelter and supportive services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and other forms of intimate-partner and gender-based violence. In 2020, YWCA Dayton provided more than 22,654 nights of shelter to over 264 women and children; answered 5,558 crisis calls; and provided more than 16,000 hours of advocacy, counseling, and crisis support.

SB 90 is crucial to protecting survivors of intimate-partner violence. Strangulation has long lasting effects that deserve the same consequences as all other forms of domestic violence.

In alignment with our mission, YWCA Dayton thus requests that you support the passage of Senate Bill 90 in support of our organization's service population and domestic violence survivors throughout the state.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you have.