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Department of Law

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November 8, 2018

RE: Ohio Senate Bill 207

Dear Sir and Madam:

This letter is in support of Ohio Senate Bill 207 expanding Felonious Assault to include non-fatal suffocation and strangulation. I have been serving as a Victim's Advocate in the State of Ohio Criminal Justice System and have assisted women with obtaining Domestic Violence Civil Protection Orders for fourteen (14) years. My experience has included ten (10) years with the Butler County Sheriff's Office as Director of their Victim Assistance Program, work experience with a Family Justice Center, and now as an Advocate with the City of Hamilton Prosecutor's Office.

Strangulation is statistically proven to be an indicator of increased lethality of violence and/or death for women who are living in a perpetual cycle of violence and abuse. Strangulation is the ultimate act of power and control by an abuser to terrify, silence, and take away all autonomy from the victim. The victims that do survive are more likely to stay in the relationship because they are terrified for themselves and their children. That being said, a strangulation victim who survives her abuser is 7 to 8 times more likely to be a victim of homicide. I have spoken with many women who are survivors of these intentionally vicious attacks who have said to me, "I knew he was going to kill me this time." "I have never seen that look in his eye." "I couldn't breathe." "I blacked out, urinated, and defecated all over myself." Keep in mind; the children are often present during these attacks.

Women and children who are experiencing Domestic Violence in their homes, where they should be safe, need our help. If Ohio Senate Bill 207 passed, victims would have additional time to relocate after a strangulation incident and arrest. Because the charge would be a felony, the abuser's bond would be higher, there would be greater penalties imposed, and the abuser may stay incarcerated until the Grand Jury indicts- and while awaiting plea or trial setting. Ohioans need this bill to pass. As public service officials, we have a responsibility to protect the rights of Ohioans.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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