



State Senator  
**TINA MAHARATH**

3rd District

**Sponsor Testimony**  
**Senator Tina Maharath**  
**Senate Bill 117**  
**Health, Human Services, & Medicaid Committee**  
**Wednesday May 1, 2019**

Chairman Burke, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 117.

Under this bill, hospitals will be required to provide victims of rape and sexual assault with information about emergency contraception. The information provided will be medically and factually accurate and approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sexual intercourse or contraceptive failure. The evidence-based information will discuss that emergency contraception is more effective the sooner it is used following unprotected sexual intercourse. Medical evidence also establishes that emergency contraception does not cause an abortion and it does not interrupt an established pregnancy. The hospital will be required to promptly offer emergency contraception to the patient and provide the emergency contraception only if the patient consents to treatment.

Senate Bill 117 also requires that hospitals in Ohio promptly provide victims of sexual assault with an assessment of the victim's risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections. After conducting the assessment, the hospital will be required to provide the patient with counseling on whether effective post-exposure treatment exists and whether delayed treatment could pose substantial risk to the patient's health. The hospital would then be required to offer treatment for sexually transmitted infections to the patient and only with the patient's consent.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are about eighteen million women who have experienced vaginal rape in their lifetime in the United States and almost three million women have experienced rape-related pregnancy. This piece of legislation is an important step in supporting women during an extremely difficult, traumatizing experience that occurs way too often in our state and nation.



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Chairman Burke and members of the Committee, I appreciate your attention to this issue and I respectfully request your favorable consideration and passage of Senate Bill 117. Thank you and I am happy to respond to questions from the committee.