

To the Senate Judiciary Committee;

My name is Todd Curtis. I am a law enforcement veteran of 28 years. I am also a certified peace officer trainer, a domestic violence instructor, a recognized court expert on domestic violence and strangulation assault. I received advanced training on the investigation and identification of strangulation assault from the Strangulation Prevention Institute in San Diego, California. I have also completed the advanced program on criminal profiling and victimology from the Forensic Institute. Over my career, I have spent thousands of hours researching and interviewing domestic violence victims and offenders. I have seen the use of strangulation increase in frequency each year. I have also found that abusers are becoming more and more violent.

Abusive partners commonly begin a controlling and manipulation pattern after getting involved with a relationship. The abuser is a master at this. They have perfected the art of manipulation and control. Through my years of experience, research and training, it is very common for the control to start with jealousy, isolation, threats and degradation of self-esteem. These are then followed up with violence. Violence will then progressively get worse. That escalation in violence includes the act of strangulation. Strangulation is the most dominant form of manipulation and control. It is literally taking the two vital functions of one's life in the grasp of hands. Pressure on the sides of the neck occlude the jugular vein and carotid artery. Pressure on the front of the throat can cut off the ability to breathe.

Opposition of this law will tell you that "Ohio already has a law which covers strangulation and that is felonious assault". Felonious assault requires serious physical harm. There is no question that strangulation is serious physical harm. The problem with using that law to prosecute a strangulation assault is the simple fact that it is historically linked to the use of weapons. Shooting at someone, stabbing someone or beating someone with a club or blunt instrument. The expectation in a felonious assault case is "serious visible injury" – that gunshot wound, that stab wound or the stitches needed to close the wounds from the beating.

The problems for making a felonious assault case for a strangulation lay within. Most of the damage done from a strangulation assault is internal injury. In a study of 300 strangulation cases conducted in San Diego, 50 percent of the victims had no visible injury. 35 percent had slight injury would could be seen with the eyes, but could not be depicted in a photograph. The remaining 15 percent had injuries which could be photographed. This study is very consistent with my experience in investigating these cases.

Ask any prosecutor in this state how hard it is to make a felonious assault case from a strangulation assault. This is why 48 other states have made a strangulation law. A specific law addressing the strangulation assault is needed in Ohio. It is needed to hold abusers accountable. It is needed to better serve domestic violence survivors in Ohio.

Please note that I am in full support of HB 3 in addition to my expressed support of the strangulation / suffocation law. Domestic Violence is the deadliest call for law enforcement officers across the United States. Additional training outside of the basic academy for peace

officers who deal with domestic violence is essential. I might add that the current number of hours in the police academy is not enough and should be increased. Furthermore, the ability for law enforcement to seek a protection order on behalf of a victim at the time of a domestic violence incident will provide greater service and protection to victims.

I will be happy to answer any questions in regards to any topics on this bill. I thank you for your time and look forward to presenting you with more information in person.

Respectfully Submitted;

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