

**Testimony in Support of HB3**  
**To address high-risk domestic violence and victimization**  
**Sponsors: Representative Boyd, Representative Carruthers**

Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of House Bill 3, legislation that would strengthen Ohio laws to protect victims of domestic violence and make offenders more accountable. As a volunteer advocate working in the courts for the past 12 years, I have witnessed several criminal cases that resulted in the injury or death of victims of repeated domestic abuse. Many times, these victims feel unable to leave the abuser due to threats made against them or their children. In some cases, they risk losing their homes, their jobs and their families if they attempt to escape the abuse.

One of the most dangerous ways that abusers exercise control over their victims is to strangle them until they lose consciousness to prove that they are capable of carrying out their threats. Strangulation causes serious physical harm and substantially increases the chance of a lethal attack in the future. Domestic violence victims suffer severe and long-term consequences from strangulation injuries, such as loss of memory, traumatic brain injury, inability to concentrate, confusion, difficulty breathing, speaking or swallowing, persistent headaches, dizziness, voice changes and pervasive fear. Statistics show that at least one in four women have been victims of domestic violence in their lifetime, and many of those have been strangled by their partner.

I have worked with victims of intimate partner violence whose strangulation injuries have left them in such fear for their lives that they suffer the long-lasting physical and emotional effects for years. Aisha's Law would provide many protections and benefits for these victims including:

- allowing law enforcement, with the consent of the victim, to request emergency protection orders from a judge when courts are not open for business
- requiring the courts to issue emergency protection orders if there is probable cause to believe there is immediate danger based on the allegations of recent incidents of violence
- expanding the offense of domestic violence to include strangulation
- making the offender eligible for a charge of aggravated murder if the victim is murdered and there have been prior domestic violence assaults by the same perpetrator
- providing funds for training law enforcement on newly mandated risk assessment tools which evaluate the offender's risk of re-offending and the victim's risk of a lethal assault
- requires that high-risk domestic violence victims be referred to local domestic violence advocacy services
- forming a study committee on the prosecution of domestic violence cases

Thank you for your efforts to strengthen Ohio laws to protect victims of domestic violence and to provide resources to help them find the supportive services they need to prevent future injury or death at the hands of their abusers. Your action will help to save the lives of Ohio citizens who are suffering from abuse in their homes where they feel trapped and unable to flee their abuser especially during this COVID-19 pandemic.

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