



INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
**Forensic
Nurses**

OHIO CHAPTER

Testimony in Support of HB3

**To address making changes to civil and criminal law regarding domestic violence,
address State Highway Patrol arrest authority, name the act Aisha's Law, and to make an
appropriation**

Sponsors: Representative Boyd and Representative Carruthers

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 3, legislation that would amend sections 109.744, 109.803, 2903.01, 2919.25, 2919.27, 2929.12, 2929.13, 2929.14, 2929.22, 2935.03, 2935.032, 2937.23 and 3113.31; to amend, for the purpose of adopting a new section number as indicated in parentheses, section 2935.033 (2935.034); and to enact new section 2935.033 and section 2919.261 of the Revised Code to make changes to civil and criminal law regarding domestic violence, to address State Highway Patrol arrest authority, to name the act Aisha's Law, and to make an appropriation.

The International Association of Forensic Nurses is an international membership organization comprised of forensic nurses working around the world and other professionals who support and complement the work of forensic nursing. The IAFN consists of over 5,000 members with 263 located in Ohio. Forensic nurses are Registered or Advanced Practice nurses who have received specific education and training. Forensic nurses provide specialized care for patients who are experiencing acute and long-term health consequences associated with victimization or violence, and/or have unmet evidentiary needs relative to having been victimized or accused of victimization.

A primary goal of forensic nursing programs is to raise public awareness that violence is a public health issue that impacts healthcare systems and communities worldwide. To that end, forensic nurses promote interventions that prevent or confront the causes of violence and strengthen the health care response to those affected by violence [1, 2, 3].

Strangulation has been identified as one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence. Forensic nursing programs across Ohio have nurses on call 24/7 to perform a medical forensic exam when survivors of strangulation report to law enforcement, advocates or come to the hospital for treatment. Survivors of

strangulation report pain in their necks, hoarseness in their voice, difficulty swallowing, bruising on their neck or behind their ears, ringing in the ears, dizziness, drooling, difficulty breathing, nausea and vomiting, incontinence, a seizure, loss of memory, confusion, and agitation. It is imperative for anyone who has been strangled to receive medical treatment because often there are no immediate outward signs or symptoms. Internal injuries can cause swelling, difficulty breathing, and even a stroke [6]. Domestic violence is a healthcare issue that destroys the quality of life in societies and communities worldwide. The aftermath of violence creates complex health issues requiring the dedicated efforts of professionals. Nursing professionals are ethically bound to promote health, welfare, and safety of all people [2, 3]. Using the science of nursing, forensic science and public health, forensic nurses are uniquely qualified to assess, formulate a nursing diagnosis treat, monitor, educate, evaluate, and intervene for persons of all ages affected by violence, minimizing the short and long-term effects of violence [1]. Healthy People 2010 supports health care services, which focus on both treatment and prevention for all members of the global community [4]. Much research is needed to learn the long term consequences of strangulation and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Laws in Ohio currently do not support domestic violence survivors who have been strangled. Offenders are likely to receive little to no punishment when charged with a misdemeanor for strangling their victim, which increases the lethality level for survivors. "Strangulation is, in fact, one of the best predictors for the subsequent homicide of victims of domestic violence. One study showed that the odds of becoming an attempted homicide victim increased by 700 percent, and the odds of becoming a homicide victim increased by 800 percent for women who had been strangled by their partner" [5]. Ohioans are in need of your help to modify current laws that reflect the seriousness of non-fatal strangulation. These amendments and additions to the domestic violence law will save lives and send a clear message to offenders that there is serious punishment associated with the violent acts of domestic violence and strangling someone.

The Ohio Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses is thankful to the sponsors, Representative Boyd and Representative Carruthers. We are grateful that they have recognized that it is time that Ohio joins the 49 other states in the country that have recognized the seriousness of non-fatal strangulation and the long term effects on survivors of domestic violence.

The Ohio Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses expresses its support for the passage of HB3. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

International Association of Forensic Nurses -- Ohio Chapter
Government Affairs Committee

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