

House Criminal Justice Committee
Proponent Testimony for House Bill 161
Terra Purdy, MS, Manager, OhioHealth Sexual Violence Services
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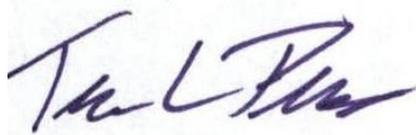
Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee:

Hello members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. My name is Terra Purdy. I am writing to you as the manager of OhioHealth Sexual Violence Services (OHSVS) and a domestic violence survivor. OHSVS includes the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio (SARNCO), the Ohio Sexual Violence Helpline (OSVH), and the Forensic Nursing Program. SARNCO is the sexual violence intervention and prevention program serving Central Ohio since 1992. SARNCO provides direct service advocacy to sexual and domestic violence survivors through our statewide and local 24-hour rape helplines; 24-Hour hospital advocacy response to 22 local adult emergency departments; community outreach; campus advocacy with a dedicated campus advocate at the Ohio State University; prevention programming in high schools, middle schools and colleges; and aftercare advocacy including in-person response, accompaniment to local police departments and/or judicial system interface.

Since programming began in 1992, SARNCO has served hundreds of thousands of sexual violence survivors. Many of those survivors experienced sexual violence at the hands of their spouse. Some have sought our hospital, helpline and aftercare advocates for solace, support, and resources in place of the legal action that they have been unable to receive. SARNCO resources and advocacy are helpful but can only do so much in protecting the survivor from their perpetrator, especially when that person is a spouse, and that is where we need legislative support. I am asking this committee to support House Bill 161 and to eliminate the Spousal Rape Exception from the Ohio Revised Code.

With your support, SARNCO and the state of Ohio can provide ALL Ohioans who are sexual violence survivors with the resources, support, advocacy, safety, and justice that they rightfully deserve. I respectfully encourage the House Criminal Justice Committee to support the passage of House Bill 161. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify in support of this legislation. I am happy to answer questions.

Respectfully,



Terra L. Purdy, MS
Manager, OhioHealth Sexual Violence Services