



Ohio Victim Witness Association

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ovwa.org

21 MAY 2024

Dear Senate Judiciary Chair Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Reps. Dolan, Gavarone, McColley, and Smith:

The Ohio Victim Witness Association (OVWA) is a statewide nonprofit that provides training, technical assistance, best practices, and legislative leadership to Ohio's crime victim advocates and allied professionals. We equip advocates with the tools they need to provide impactful, ethical, and empowering services to Ohio's crime victims and survivors.

Thank you for the opportunity to express OVWA's support for H.B. 111, which increases the sentencing range for third-degree felony domestic violence offenses and establishes a presumption in favor of a prison term. A presumption of prison time can provide victims of domestic violence with the time and safety to work with their local domestic violence programs to evaluate their needs, establish a safety plan, and determine a course of action. This time away from an abusive partner can allow a victim the opportunity to identify strategies to strengthen their safety and/or to make a plan to leave the relationship. This time can be critical for victims of domestic violence.

On behalf of the Ohio Victim Witness Association and our 500 members, I would like to thank Representatives LaRe and Miller for their efforts to make our state safer for domestic violence victims. Measures like H.B. 111 are an essential tool that victims and advocates can utilize as they work towards safety.

Thank you for your consideration, and OVWA welcomes your questions.

Sincerely,

Elyse McConnell, MBA

Executive Director