



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence Supports an End to the Statute of Limitations & Spousal Exemptions on Rape

COLUMBUS, OH— As Ohio’s statewide anti-sexual violence coalition, the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV) supports S.B. 162 *Eliminate Statute of Limitations for Rape; Spousal Exceptions* and urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to hold additional hearings on this important bill in order to hear from constituents, survivors, professionals in the gender-based violence field, and other interested parties. Today, State Senators Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood) and Sean J. O’Brien (D-Bazetta) provided sponsor testimony to the Committee, asking for their support in removing the statute of limitations for criminal prosecutions of ORC § 2907.02 Rape and certain related civil actions.

“Current law does not account for increasingly advanced DNA testing technology or research that demonstrates why survivors of sex crimes wait to come forward,” said Antonio. “There should be no time limit on justice.”

SB 162 will align Ohio with seven other states, including neighboring states Kentucky and West Virginia, that have also eliminated the statute of limitations regarding sex crimes.

“As technology changes in the criminal justice system, we are finding new ways to gain vital information from evidence found at crime scenes,” O’Brien explained. “Any perpetrator who could be identified by these new revelations should not be able to hide behind an artificial time constraint.”

The bill would not apply to crimes already past the statute of limitations.

OAESV has been involved in previous efforts to remove the Statute of Limitations, including an effort that resulted in a modified bill that, instead of eliminating the statute of limitations, increased it to 25 years with a 5-year DNA match extension. As an agency, OAESV communicated that this incremental improvement was better than no improvement at all but that the only way to ensure justice for all survivors is to eliminate this limitation completely.

Rosa Beltré, Executive Director of OAESV, says, “Ohio continues to be associated with high profile cases in which offenders can never be held accountable. Eliminating the statute of limitations for rape would allow survivors in Ohio to be believed and to find justice served when they are ready to share their stories and hold their perpetrators accountable. As a state, we need to do better for survivors and their calls for justice.”

S.B. 162 would also remove the spousal exemptions from § 2907.02 Rape, § 2907.03 Sexual Battery, § 2907.04 Unlawful Sexual Conduct with a Minor, § 2907.05 Gross Sexual Imposition, § 2907.06 Sexual Imposition, and § 2907.07 Importuning. These laws, commonly referred to as Ohio’s Marital

Rape Exemption, do not allow a spouse to use force or the threat of force in these acts, but they do essentially allow the perpetrator—the spouse of the victim—to use drugs, intoxicants, or controlled substances to impair the victim, or to otherwise substantially impair the victim’s ability to resist.

When bills are introduced, they are only guaranteed one hearing after they are referred to committee. This bill received its only guaranteed hearing this morning, and, as is standard in first hearing procedures, the sponsors were the only parties allowed to testify. Without support from member programs, individual citizens, and other groups, S.B. 162 is at great risk of never having another hearing.

Those who support this bill can contact Ohio senators to ask them to allow more hearings on the bill and to move this bill forward. [In the call to action linked here](#) from their website, OAESV has provided additional information on S.B. 162 and H.B. 279 as well as messaging for supporters to email (1) their own Senator; (2) each member of the Senate Judiciary Committee; and (3) the bill’s co-sponsors.

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As Ohio's statewide coalition, OAESV uses an anti-oppression lens to advocate for comprehensive responses and rape crisis services for survivors and to empower communities to prevent sexual violence.

www.oaesv.org

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