Fact Sheet Series for the 135th General Assembly

House Bill 143:
Enact the Ohio Safe Homes Act
Sponsors: Representative Grim

Current law:

Current Ohio landlord-tenant law is silent regarding exceptions for termination and the prohibition of retaliation from landlords against a tenant for termination due to a sexually-oriented offense.

If passed, this legislation would:

- Allow tenants who are victims of rape, attempted rape, domestic violence, dating violence, abuse, or a sexually oriented offense (“tenants”) to terminate a rental agreement or change the locks on the premises if:
  - A qualifying protection order is issued or approved for the protection of the tenant; or
  - The tenant has reported the alleged sexually-oriented offense to a qualified 3rd party (e.g. law enforcement, health care professional, victim advocate)
- Prohibit landlords from taking retaliatory action (eviction, increasing rent) against the tenant, if the tenant terminates the lease or changes the locks
  - Prohibits landlords from disclosing the tenant’s personal information to the individual restricted from contacting the tenant per the QPO
  - Prohibit landlords from refusing to rent to individuals based on past or possible future incidences of sexually oriented offenses
  - Authorizes a nonrefundable income tax credit for a landlord whose tenant has terminated the tenant’s rental agreement pursuant to the bill
- Rental Termination
  - Requires tenants to provide landlords with the notification of termination, vacate the property within 30 days, and continue to pay rent until they vacate
- Allow tenants to install new locks but they must notify the landlord and provide the landlord with a key
- Permit tenants to sue a landlord who takes retaliatory action and recover any actual damages or reasonable attorney’s fees

Why this bill is important:

The majority of all sexual assaults occur where the survivor lives. However, 80% of sexual assault survivors cannot relocate due to lacking funding and housing options. In turn, lack of housing or inadequate shelter also increases the risk of sexual violence. Survivors deserve access to safe housing wherein they feel physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe from violence.