

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OAESV Thanks Governor DeWine for Increased Rape Crisis Services Allocation in State Budget

Yesterday, Governor DeWine released his proposed budget for FY 2024-2025. The Governor allocated \$30 million for survivors and rape crisis services in the Ohio Rape Crisis Centers line item (“Line Item”). This investment represents a meaningful commitment from our state government to support critical rape crisis services throughout our state at a time when many of Ohio’s rape crisis centers are struggling to keep their programs staffed and funded due to federal funding cuts. In 2020, these programs lost over \$8.3 million per fiscal year in operating expenses and faced an additional 40% reduction in funding in 2021.

The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV) has advocated for this increase in state funding, which will sustain programs that are working 24/7 to provide crisis hotline response and medical advocacy, legal advocacy, prevention education and other life-saving services across the entire state.

Ohio currently has just 35 rape crisis centers serving 78 counties. These centers have had to cut staff and reduce service areas, all while responding to a 55% increase in the monthly rate of hotline calls and an unprecedented rise in survivors seeking emergency shelter, legal advocacy, and mental health services. To expand coverage across the state, rape crisis centers need financial resources to retain existing services and allow services to reach new areas.

An increase in the Rape Crisis Centers Line Item sustains essential, life-saving services in our communities. “Combating sexual violence in Ohio is a bipartisan issue. It takes an entire village to ensure survivors have access to services and that we are working as a community to prevent sexual violence from occurring. Governor DeWine as well as Attorney General Yost have always understood the need for funding for rape crisis programs and have been committed to assuring access to sustainable funding. We are grateful for this continued dedication to survivors,” says OAESV’s President & CEO, Rosa Beltré.

The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence will continue their advocacy efforts at their upcoming Advocacy Day, taking place on April 20th at the Ohio Statehouse. The yearly event is focused on engagement and discussion between Ohio lawmakers and their constituents who are passionate about ending sexual violence, and it draws survivors of sexual violence, professionals, and volunteers from all around Ohio.

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Interviews available upon request.

As Ohio's statewide coalition, OAESV advocates for comprehensive responses and rape crisis services for survivors and empowers communities to prevent sexual violence.