



Fact Sheet Series for the 135th General Assembly

House Bill 531:

Enact Braden's Law to prohibit sexual extortion
Sponsors: Representative Lear, Representative Lorenz

Current law:

Currently, Ohio does not have a criminal offense for sexual extortion.

If passed, this legislation would:

- Create the new criminal offense of sexual extortion and apply to anyone who threatens to release, exhibit, or distribute private images of another person for financial gain (begins as a 3rd degree felony). This includes compelling individuals to perform acts against their will, inducing them to commit offenses, obtaining additional private images, or obtaining anything of value through coercion.
- Create the new criminal offense of aggravated sexual extortion - if the person being extorted is a minor, elder, or person with a disability, the penalty rises to a 1st degree felony.
- Require courts to do an expedited review (30 days) of a request to a device if the request is made by a parent or guardian of a deceased minor.

Considerations for this legislation:

- With this particular type of crime, young people are the most common targets — [71% of victims involved in sexual extortion cases are 18 or younger](#).
- Victims are most often targeted through social media networks and other online spaces, where perpetrators manipulate their victims into sending them sexually explicit content and demand money, favors, or other actions from the victim. Perpetrators use deception and threats to control and terrorize victims, often resulting in serious emotional, physical, psychological, and reputational harm to the victim.
- According to both the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the FBI there has been a significant increase in the number of sexual extortion cases in recent years.
 - [In 2023 alone, NCMEC received 26,718 reports of financial sextortion, up from 10,731 reports in 2022.](#)
 - In 2022, the [FBI reported](#) receiving “thousands of reports related to the financial sextortion of minors, primarily boys, representing an exponential increase from previous years.” They also report being aware of more than a dozen suicides following these incidents.