

Fact Sheet

House Bill 447: Regards the dollar caps on certain damages in civil actions



Sponsor: Representative Stewart

Legislative Proposal

Ohio law currently limits how much someone can receive for pain, suffering, and emotional distress — even if a jury awards them more money in a civil case. In many cases, that amount is capped at \$250,000, or three times the victim's (plaintiff's) loss.

HB 447 would raise these limits to the greater of \$415,000 or three times economic losses, with maximums of \$580,000 per plaintiff and \$830,000 per occurrence. It would also increase caps on punitive damages to strengthen accountability for serious misconduct and require annual inflation adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), ensuring that compensation keeps pace with the cost of living.

Talking Points

Justice That Keeps Up Over Time

Current caps have lost roughly half their value since enacted in 2005, meaning survivors and victims today receive far less real compensation for identical harm.

Fair Compensation for Real Harm

Victims of sexual violence and human trafficking often have low economic losses but extremely high noneconomic harm. The impacts of trauma are lifelong and far-reaching and not always easily calculable.

Stronger Accountability for Wrongdoing

Low caps allow corporations, institutions, and offenders to treat negligence or abuse as an acceptable cost of doing business in Ohio.

OAESV's Position

OAESV maintains a survivor-centered, trauma-informed stance that damage caps are an injustice to the suffering experienced by survivors of sexual violence.

This is a straightforward bill that ensures damage caps keep the pace with inflation and make progress towards our goal of achieving greater economic justice for survivors.