



POSITION STATEMENT

October 22nd, 2026

Contact: Taylr Ucker-Lauderman

Chief Engagement Officer

Phone: (216) 317-2339

Email: tucker-lauderman@oaesv.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/oaesv/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/oaesv/>

Survivors Deserve Dignity in Every Public Conversation

The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV) opposes the use of anyone's experience of sexual abuse to shame, discredit, or silence them. A recent political advertisement in Ohio has brought harmful messages about abuse into public conversation. As Ohio's statewide sexual violence coalition, we have a responsibility to address these messages and their impact on survivors and communities.

Survivors deserve dignity, privacy, and the freedom to define and share their own experiences. This applies regardless of their political beliefs, professional position, or public visibility. We cannot claim to believe survivors only when their stories are convenient, their identities are familiar, or their experiences align with our personal beliefs. Our commitment must remain consistent.

There is no single way to respond to sexual abuse. Survivors may delay disclosure, maintain relationships with people who have harmed them, or choose not to speak publicly. These responses do not determine a survivor's credibility. Using them to cast doubt on someone's experience reinforces harmful expectations about how survivors should behave to be believed.

Public messages reach far beyond the person they reference. Survivors in our families, workplaces, and communities are also listening. Messages that exploit or dismiss one person's experience can leave others questioning whether they will be treated with respect if they seek support or share their own stories.

OAESV does not endorse or oppose candidates. Our responsibility is to support survivors and challenge harmful attitudes about sexual violence wherever they appear. Supporting survivors is a responsibility we all share, across political affiliations.

We encourage everyone to pause before sharing content about sexual abuse: Is the information verified? Is important context missing? Could sharing it cause further harm? Each of us can help create conversations that respect survivors' choices and reject the use of abuse as a tool for humiliation.

To survivors: You do not owe anyone your story, your attention, or your participation in a public debate. You are allowed to set boundaries, mute content, and step away. You deserve support on your own terms.

Ohio's rape crisis centers are here to help. Find support through [OAESV.org/Map](https://www.oaesv.org/Map).

#####

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