

129<sup>th</sup> Ohio General Assembly  
House Criminal Justice Committee  
Wednesday, February 23, 2011  
Proponent Testimony  
House Bill 24

My name is Phyllis Carlson-Riehm. I serve as Executive Director of ACTION OHIO Coalition For Battered Women, a statewide domestic violence advocacy organization. And although domestic violence is the focus of our work, we are concerned about violence in a broader sense, including child abuse, dating violence, bullying as well as elder abuse in its various forms. Different forms of violence are often interrelated and may co-exist in the same household, in the same family.

I am here today to express support for House Bill 24 and would urge committee members to vote in favor of passage of this legislation.

House Bill 24 would require the Sheriff's Office to notify long-term care facilities to inform their residents when a Tier III sex offender intends to reside in the facility or registers an address within the specified geographical notification area.

Currently homeowners, renters, apartment dwellers and members of the business community are all notified when a Tier III sex offender moves into the neighborhood. This enables them to share the information with their families and employees and to take any necessary precautions to be safe and stay safe when coming and going in their neighborhood. (And, by the way, there is no indication that the issuing of the notification cards has resulted in a mass exodus from a particular neighborhood or business complex.)

Unfortunately residents of long-term care facilities aren't given the same information to help them be safe and stay safe. As a result, residents of such facilities are particularly vulnerable. Individuals residing in long-term care facilities, on an on-going basis or for the short term, during a rehabilitation period, are there because they are experiencing some sort of physical challenge or health care problem. Even though they may have family and friends who visit frequently, there are many hours when loved ones are not present to supervise their care or look in on them. Consequently, residents must look out for themselves the best they can. In most cases, the biggest problems residents may face are bad food and inattentive staff late at night or early in the morning, when there is no response to a call for help. But there can be greater dangers, even if they are at a minimum, and the residents of long-term care facilities deserve information that could be useful in protecting themselves from assault, especially from violent sex offenders.

I'd like to show a sample of the notification provided by the Sheriff's Office, just in case you have never seen it before. On one side of the card, titled Sex Offender Notification, there is information specifically related to safeguarding children, because children are more vulnerable to sex offenders than adults. On the other side of the card, with the personal information about the offender, there is a box with the Sheriff's badge graphic at the top. Included is the sentence: "**This information is made available for the purpose of protecting the public.**" I urge you to pass House Bill 24, because it will provide some needed protection for members of the public who are not currently protected, and they, like children, can be vulnerable to victimization, especially if they are experiencing physical and/or mental disabilities. Please help protect residents of long-term care facilities by passing House Bill 24.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to express these views.

Phyllis L. Carlson-Riehm, Executive Director  
ACTION OHIO Coalition For Battered Women