



## Monthly Press Kit

### Legislation Impacting Sexual Violence Survivors in the 133<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly

August 2019

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### Ohio Operating Budget Rape Crisis Centers Line Item Increase

#### I. Background:

Before 2014, Ohio survivors could access rape crisis services in less than half of Ohio's 88 counties. Rape crisis centers serving these counties operated heavily on federal grants. The vast majority of federal grants restrict funding to the creation or maintenance of new positions, and heavily regulate the tasks those grants will support. This left Ohio rape crisis programs without a dependable funding stream to cover costs associated with keeping their doors open. Further, federal grant match requirements made it impossible for rape crisis programs to expand services to other counties. Federal victim services grants, including the [Victims of Crime Act \(VOCA\) grant](#), require funding recipients to match grant funds with a local cash donation or volunteer hour match to increase the amount of additional resources available to support projects the VOCA grant funds. Most Ohio rape crisis programs, especially rural centers, would not be able to meet the match requirement if they increased their funding to serve additional counties. This effectively froze rape crisis service expansion before the Rape Crisis Centers line item.

#### II. Rape Crisis Center Line Item as Reported in Ohio Operating Budgets Per Fiscal Year:

|                 | 2014    | 2015      | 2016      | 2017      | 2018      | 2019      | 2020              |
|-----------------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| \$              | 999,987 | 1,000,000 | 1,499,925 | 1,500,000 | 1,550,000 | 1,550,000 | 4,750,000         |
| Counties Served | 42      | 51        | 74        | 75        | 75        | 79        | Not Yet Available |

#### III. OAESV's Role

As Ohio's statewide anti-sexual violence coalition, OAESV serves as the rape crisis community's collective voice on matters of public policy. In that capacity, OAESV led the effort to increase the line item over 200 percent to \$4,750,000. OAESV's campaign included engaging key Representatives and Senators for budget amendment sponsorship, amplifying the voices of local rape crisis programs through written and oral communications with the lawmakers representing their services areas demonstrating the potential benefits to their constituents, involving municipal and county governments to express support. Additionally, OAESV hosted a Statehouse advocacy day before the House budget amendments were due, during which 108 local rape crisis program staff and survivors met with 98 legislative offices about the proposed increase. After the release of the House's budget, OAESV conducted follow-up meetings with Senate leaders and committee members, and provided testimony in both chambers.

#### IV. Legislative Leaders:

Representatives Laura Lanese submitted an amendment to increase the Rape Crisis Centers Line Item from the original allocation of \$1,550,000 in the Executive Budget. Representatives Tavia Galonski, Janine Boyd, Stephanie Howse, Bride Rose Sweeney, Adam Miller, and Sarah LaTourette also

submitted increases during the House budget process. OAESV and our members also received significant support from Senator Nickie Antonio, Senator Stephanie Kunze, Senator Peggy Lehner, Senator Teresa Fedor, among others.

V. OAESV Staff Quotes:

- “This increase will change the landscape of rape crisis services in our state and will positively impact the lives of thousands of Ohioans. We are so thankful that the Ohio legislature and the Ohio Attorney General’s Office have made this decision to support survivors in Ohio and the advocates who serve them and to help put an end to sexual violence in our state.” Rosa Beltre, *Executive Director*
- “Data from rape crisis programs and the [Office of Criminal Justice Services](#) shows a skyrocketing increase in the demand for services since the last line item increase. Ohio lawmakers responded to this data with thoughtful engagement and analysis throughout the budget process. The result was a line item increase sufficient to provide all Ohio survivors with access to services, regardless of their county of residence. We are thrilled that our state government has created a fiscal platform for rape crisis professionals to increase their innovative services and prevention efforts.”

VI. OAESV Contact for Questions: Camille Crary, *Director of Legal Services & Policy*, [ccrary@oaesv.org](mailto:ccrary@oaesv.org)

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### **Removal of Statute of Limitations for § 2907.02 Rape**

I. Background:

Before 1999, Ohio’s statute of limitation for violations of § 2907.02 Rape was a mere six (6) years. That period was extended to 20 years in 1999, but [with the discovery of over 10,000 backlogged Ohio rape kits](#), Ohio lawmakers sought to eliminate the statute of limitations for these offenses. Unable to gain sufficient legislative support for a full elimination, Ohio legislators settled on extending the statute of limitations for § 2907.02 Rape to 25 years, with the following exceptions: (1) if 25 years has lapsed, but a DNA record in a § 2907.02 investigation is found to match another DNA record, the prosecution may bring the criminal action within five years; or (2) if 25 years has not lapsed, and a DNA record in a § 2907.02 investigation is found to match another DNA record, the prosecution may bring the criminal action within 25 years of the rape or 5 five years of the match, whichever is later.

Though this increase provided opportunities for prosecution in cases of delayed offender identification, it continues to deny justice where the survivor knew the offender’s identity or where other delays denied access to the criminal justice system.

II. Current Legislation:

[Inspired by Dr. Richard Strauss’s victims](#), Governor Mike DeWine and Attorney General Dave Yost have called on the Ohio Legislature to eliminate the statute of limitations. The following companion bills seek to eliminate the statute of limitations for § 2907.02 Rape, while also eliminating the spousal exemption for numerous Chapter 2907 violations:

- [House Bill 279 \(Sponsors: Representatives Galonski and Boggs\)](#)
- [Senate Bill 162 \(Sponsors: Senators Antonio and O’Brien\)](#)

III. OAESV Staff Quotes:

- “Ohio’s failure to provide Dr. Strauss’s victims with justice reiterates what we have long known – no statute of limitations for rape is truly long enough. In the past twenty years, the Ohio legislature has extended the statute of limitations from six years to 20 years, to 25 years with a DNA-match extension. Yet, after each of these extensions, egregious cases come to light that cannot be prosecuted because the prior adjustments to the statute of limitations do

not encompass the full spectrum of abuses. Even when survivors know the identity of their abusers, layers of barriers can prevent immediate reporting and prosecution. In some cases, survivors are living under the control of their abuser. In others, they tell a trusted person they believe will report to police. Many survivors focus first on their own recovery before reporting to police. Still others fear retaliation or other forms of additional harm for years before finally coming forward. The very nature of sexual violence mandates the full elimination of time limits for prosecution. Until Ohio fully removes its statute of limitations for § 2907.02 Rape, abusers will continue to evade justice.” – Camille Crary, *Director of Legal Services and Policy*

- IV. OAESV Contact for Questions: Camille Crary, Director of Legal Services & Policy, [ccrary@oaesv.org](mailto:ccrary@oaesv.org)