



## OUR MISSION

To establish and protect rights, fair treatment and access to quality services for crime victims and witnesses in Ohio.

### Ohio Victim Witness Association

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90 Northwoods Blvd., Suite B6  
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November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018

The Honorable Kevin Bacon  
Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee  
The Ohio Senate  
1 Capitol Square, Ground Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Senator Bacon:

The Ohio Victim Witness Association writes in support of Senate Bill 207 adding strangulation and suffocation to the Aggravated Assault statute as a Second-Degree Felony. We value your effort championing a bill for the benefit of victims throughout the state of Ohio.

We support Senate Bill 207 As Introduced without language specifically limiting the Second-Degree Felony to offenders in domestic violence and sexual violence situations. The reality for many victims of strangulation and suffocation is that the violent act does not always occur between intimate partners or with sexual motivation. To limit Senate Bill 207 in this way is to leave a considerable portion of strangulation and suffocation victims without criminal recourse, or personal closure, and subjects a vulnerable population to a probability of recurring violence. Limiting this crime to only domestic violence and sexual violence would also contradict Ohio's constitutional amendment, Marsy's Law, which seeks to expand the definition of victim.

Furthermore, Ohio Victim Witness Association supports charging first-time offenders of strangulation and suffocation with a Second-Degree Felony due to the severity of the crime. Ohio Senator Lehner's sentiment at the committee hearing on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, linking strangulation and suffocation to attempted murder exemplifies the gravity of the offense and provides direct evidence for ensuring first-time offenders are penalized adequately.

Thank you for recognizing and addressing the disparity in the law affecting victims of strangulation and suffocation.

Sincerely,

Liz Poprocki, MA, RAAS, CA  
Executive Director  
Ohio Victim Witness Association