



Legislative Newsletter

July 2023

Investing in Safety: State Budget Includes \$20 Million for Domestic Violence Programs

On behalf of the Ohio Domestic Violence Network and our 76 member programs, we extend our sincerest gratitude to the lawmakers who supported this funding increase and to Governor DeWine and Attorney General Yost for their commitment to addressing domestic violence and dedication to building safer communities.

This is a testament to the power of advocacy and the impact it can have on the lives of survivors and their communities. Thank you to everyone who participated in Advocacy Day at the Statehouse in March and to those who contacted their legislators about our request. Together, we have made a resounding statement that no one should endure abuse, and that support and resources must be available to all who need them.

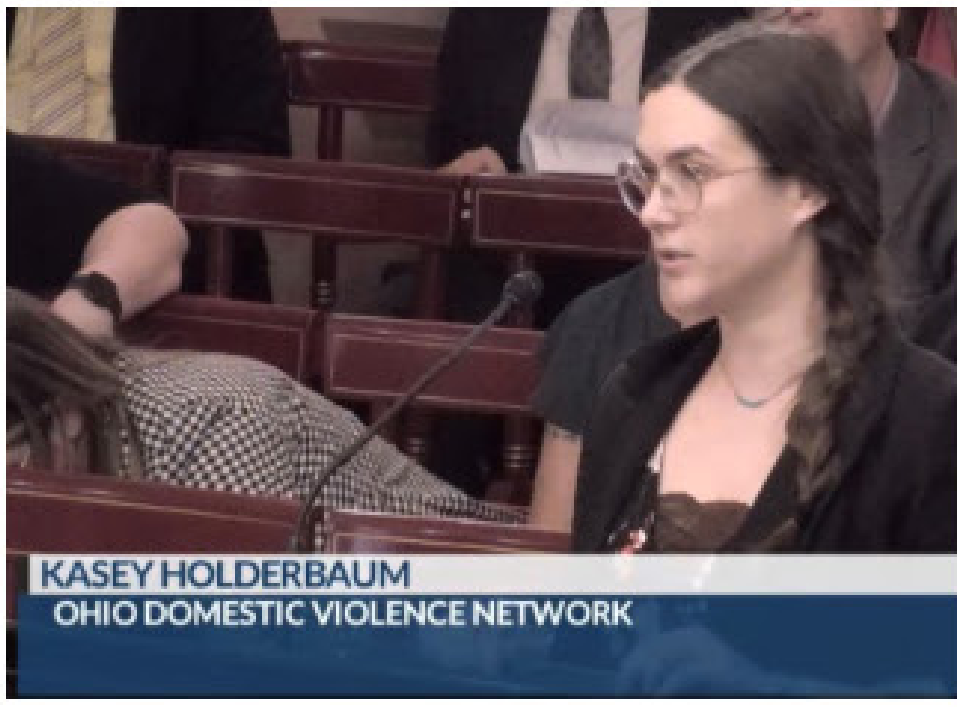
On July 4th, [Governor DeWine signed Ohio's Fiscal Year 2024-2025 operating budget bill into law.](#)

State Issues

H.B. 161: Eliminate spousal exceptions for certain sex offenses

The bill would eliminate the spousal rape exception currently in Ohio law. The legislation would also permit a person to testify against their spouse in a prosecution.

[Read our full testimony here.](#)



Kasey Holderbaum, Health and Disability Project Coordinator, testified before the House Criminal Justice Committee in support of H.B. 161.

Federal Issues



Washington, DC. June 6-7, 2023

The Ohio Domestic Violence Network, in partnership with the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence, joined the National Network to End Domestic Violence and the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence to amplify the voices of sexual assault and domestic violence survivors on Capitol Hill.

During meetings with House and Senator staffers, we asked for increased funding to meet survivors' housing, legal, economic, health, safety, and other urgent needs.

Federal Funding and Appropriations Overview

Together, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) programs, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund, and related programs create and support comprehensive responses to the needs of victims of domestic violence. Congress considers funding for VAWA, FVPSA, VOCA, and related programs each year when it "appropriates" dollars to these programs in the Congressional Budget.

FVPSA, VOCA and VAWA funding support domestic violence shelters, law enforcement, courts, rape crisis centers, children's services, prevention, community outreach, and other state and local programs that provide services for victims and families. These programs have made significant progress towards addressing domestic and sexual violence. In addition to saving lives, VAWA, FVPSA, and VOCA save money by reducing future violence and other related social costs.

What can you do? Congress needs to hear that funding these programs are a priority. [Click HERE](#) to send a message directly to your elected member of Congress.

For more information on our specific asks of funding these programs, please visit the [FY 24 Appropriations Factsheet](#).

Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA)

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) went into effect June 27, 2023. It provides workers the right to receive reasonable accommodations, like light duty, pumping breaks, flexible and modified schedules, transfers away from toxic chemicals, or a stool to sit on, for pregnancy, childbirth recovery, lactation, and related medical conditions.

Related resources for this new federal legislation:

- [PWFA Outreach Toolkit](#) (in both English and Spanish)
- [PWFA know-your-rights resource](#), which is also available in [Spanish](#), is a one-stop-shop for information on this law.

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Ohio Domestic Violence Network
1855 E Dublin Granville Road
Columbus, OH 43229
United States

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