



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Victim Assistance Program Prepared for New Legislation

Ohio House Bill 1, bipartisan legislation to modernize Ohio's domestic violence laws, goes into effect on July 6, 2018. The legislation expands the right of civil protection orders to victims of dating violence. House Bill 1 is a monumental achievement for the victims' rights movement. Previously, Ohio law did not allow victims of dating violence to obtain civil protection orders because these relationships did not fit the definition of domestic violence. Before this legislation, Ohio and Georgia were the only two states that did not allow victims of dating violence to apply for domestic violence civil protection orders.

The change in legislation is crucial because victims of dating violence suffer through the same trauma as victims of domestic violence. Prior to the new legislation, victims were often subject to added victimizations because they were unable to receive the help they needed due to legislation constraints.

The law now allows victim advocates to give more comprehensive support to victims of domestic violence in dating relationships. Mickey Valdez, Director of Services, with Victim Assistance Program states that "advocates are doing their due diligence to learn about the new legislation, changes to domestic violence civil protection order paperwork, adjustments to new petition filing requirements, and on how to best serve those who seek help." In addition, the agency is working closely with the Summit County Clerk of Courts to be ready when the law goes into effect.

The mission of Victim Assistance Program is to empower the community to restore lives impacted by crisis, violence, and tragedy. The purpose of the Agency is to provide 24-hour crisis intervention, advocacy, and education to victims of crime and trauma and the professional community who serves this population. To learn more about Victim Assistance Program's services, and ways to get involved, visit victimassistanceprogram.org or call our 24-hour hotline, 330.376.0040.

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