

**Testimony before the House Judiciary and Public Safety Committee in Support of  
House Bills (HBs) 4798 and 4974**

September 14, 2021

My name is Miriam Jane-Black O'Shea and I am a member of the Junior League of Birmingham, one of nine Leagues in the state of Michigan. On behalf of the Michigan Junior Leagues, I would like to express my gratitude to the House Judiciary Committee Chair and Members for holding a hearing on these bills and for granting me the opportunity to share my own story. The MJL SPAC supports in principle HB 4798 and 4974, bills which will allow prosecutors to continue their long-standing practice of keeping the personal information of victims and witnesses confidential. Without these bills, the recently passed Address Confidentiality Program Act will be severely undermined even before it is implemented and is available to victims, survivors, and those who fear for their safety because of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking. I have reviewed the bills and support them personally.

I would like to share my experience as it highlights the need for an effective Address Confidentiality Program and for the bills before you today. It is difficult to sum up my very long, complex, and disturbing case, but I will try to be succinct. In 2002 I was attacked by who I assumed at the time was a home intruder. I fought and negotiated with this man for my life and for whatever reason he changed his mind. He dropped the knotted pantyhose he had pulled out of his coat pocket to strangle me with and ran away leaving me on a bathroom floor bruised and terrified. Three months later my then husband was arrested by the FBI for kidnapping, conspiracy, and the assault of a woman he had been having an affair with for several years. She was found on the side of a road in Tennessee beaten, tasered, stabbed three times and clothed only in plastic wrap used for shipping pallets. He was convicted of kidnapping and assault in which the judge stated in sentencing that she believed a brutal sexual assault took place. He was sentenced to 167 months in federal prison.

During this time several horrifying things came out, including the FBI investigating what happened to me when I was attacked. They believe, as do I, that he had arranged for the stranger to be in the house I was attacked in and that he had intended to murder me. Throughout the kidnapping trial and his incarceration, I lived in constant fear that he would find where my son and I lived and that he would try to have me killed again. He did not have my physical address, only a cell phone number and he knew I lived in metro Detroit. I was fortunate that my family had the means to put everything in their name; leases, utilities, etc. Not all victims have the kind of support I was so privileged to have had.

I am grateful you have chosen to consider these bills today. No one should ever have to choose between safety and their right to press charges against someone that has caused harm, or to testify as a witness to a crime. I ask that you consider how crucial it is to uphold the principles of Public Act 301 of 2020, the Address Confidentiality Program Act, in our court processes and procedures. Potential victims, survivors, and witnesses deserve this protection. Thank you for your consideration.