



For More Information Contact:  
**Jodi DeVore, [jdevore@openarmsfindlay.org](mailto:jdevore@openarmsfindlay.org)**  
**Communications Coordinator**  
**Open Arms Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Services**  
**Phone: (419) 420-9261**

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## **LEGISLATION COULD REMEDY OHIO'S FAILED TEEN DATING VIOLENCE REPORT**

FINDLAY, Ohio (4/9/2009) – Ohio failed the State-By-State Teen Dating Violence Report Card for the second year since Break the Cycle, a teen violence prevention organization, issued them. States are graded on a system which assigns positive and negative points to their laws regarding domestic violence and protection offered to teens experiencing dating violence. Ohio is among 11 states that failed the report, as Ohio does not allow teen victims' access to a domestic violence protection order. New legislation could change this by offering protection to teens.

House Bill 10, sponsored by Rep. Edna Brown (D-Toledo), would allow juvenile court judges to issue protection orders to juveniles who are victims of dating violence. Currently, Ohio law requires that one must be 18 years of age or older to obtain a protection order. This law prevented Johanna Orozco, a 20-year-old Cleveland native, from receiving a protection order in 2007; her former boyfriend later stalked her and shot her in the face.

House Bill 19, sponsored by Rep. Sandra Harwood (D-Niles), would require school districts to adopt dating abuse policies and education in the classroom. This bill, dubbed "Tina's Law" after 18-year-old Tina Croucher of Cincinnati who was murdered by her former boyfriend in 1992, is introduced again after dying in the Senate last year.

Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray supports HB 10 and HB 19. The bills are currently in hearings but still must be voted on by the Senate.

Open Arms conducted an anonymous survey to collect information about whether this issue is specifically impacting our own teens. In survey of about 200 Hancock County youth aged 13-19, 35% said they know someone who has been the victim of teen dating violence, and 50% know someone who has been the victim of sexual assault. Open Arms encourages contacting your local state senator and

representative to support the passage of HB 10 and HB 19, which will protect victims of teen violence and provide teen dating violence prevention education. Visit our blog at [www.openarmsfindlay.blogspot.com](http://www.openarmsfindlay.blogspot.com) for further information on how to contact state officials and to learn more about HB 10 and HB 19. Findlay residents can contact State Representative Cliff Hite at (614) 466-3819, and State Senator Stephen Buehrer at (614) 466-8150.

Open Arms Domestic Violence & Rape Crisis services is a nonprofit agency supported in part by the Hancock County United Way. Open Arms provides six program services to those living and working in the greater Hancock County community. The six programs include Rape Crisis Services, Child Advocacy, Violence Recovery Project, Outreach Services, the Harmony House Visitation & Exchange program, and Emergency Shelter Services. The 24-hour Crisis Hotline is 419-422-4766. Join us at our blog at [www.openarmsfindlay.blogspot.com](http://www.openarmsfindlay.blogspot.com) for updates on our everyday life here at Open Arms.

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Council on Domestic Violence, Inc.  
P.O. Box 496  
Findlay, OH 45839  
(419) 420-9261 Business Line  
(419) 422-4766 24-Hour Crisis Hotline  
[www.openarmsfindlay.org](http://www.openarmsfindlay.org)

