

Reese Artero

HB0496 - Criminal Law - Sexual Crimes - Definition of Consent and Repeal of Force

I stand before you today, not just as a survivor of sexual assault, but as a voice for countless individuals who have faced similar traumas. The passage of HB0496 is not just necessary; it's a step towards rectifying a profound injustice in our legal system that often leaves victims voiceless.

In my experience, the fear of not being believed or the potential repercussions of saying no overshadowed my ability to consent. This bill's clear definition of consent and its acknowledgment that submission under fear, threat, or coercion does not equate to consent, mirrors the harrowing realities many survivors face.

Statistics indicate that a significant percentage of sexual assault incidents go unreported, often due to the victim's fear of not being taken seriously or misunderstanding what constitutes consent. HB0496 clarifies these ambiguities, offering a beacon of hope for survivors seeking justice.

I urge you to consider the psychological and societal impact of sexual assault, underscored by countless studies and reports, and support HB0496. It's time our laws reflect a comprehensive understanding of consent, offering protection and justice to those who have suffered in silence for too long.

Thank you for your attention and empathy towards this critical issue.