



SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

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Summit County Prosecutor Announces “Safe Access Unit” to Provide Safeguards for People Seeking Child Support

AKRON, Ohio (Friday, October 14, 2022) – Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced today that, in conjunction with Domestic Violence Awareness month, a new program is available in Summit County to assist parents who are survivors of domestic or intimate partner violence and are seeking child support.

The “Safe Access Unit” through the Prosecutor’s Office Child Support Enforcement Agency will work with survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence to provide safe access to child support services. If a parent feels that seeking child support would put themselves and their children in danger, the “Safe Access Unit” can offer safeguards.

“Since becoming Summit County Prosecutor I have fought to get child support in the hands of people who need it the most. One of the primary reasons people stay in an abusive relationship is the potential lack of financial support. Abusers control their victims by denying access to money, a car, telephone or legal documents. This new “Safe Access Unit” will create protections in the child support process so parents will have the critical financial resources they need to survive,” said Prosecutor Walsh.

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Safeguards include conducting administrative hearings by telephone, which allows parents to access child support services without having direct contact with the other parent. The Prosecutor's Office Child Support Enforcement Agency also takes steps to keep parents safe when going to court, including providing an advocate to accompany parents if they are concerned about their safety.

One in four women and one in seven men have been victims of severe physical violence. Also, one in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year, with 90% being eyewitnesses to the violence.

If you are seeking a child support order and are a victim of domestic violence or are worried about enforcing a child support order due to a violent experience with the other parent, please contact CSEA's Safe Access Program at (330) 643-2765.

Summit County's Hope and Healing Survivor Resource Center is great resource to learn more about domestic and intimate partner violence. Information can be found on the agency's website at - <https://hopeandhealingresources.org/battered-womens-shelter/>.

Or call Hope and Healing at 330.374.0740 or the agency's hotline at 330.374.1111.