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Courts may get power over dating

Bill to allow orders against youths for violence

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Plain Dealer Reporter

A bill aimed at giving juvenile courts the ability to issue protection orders in cases of suspected teen dating violence was introduced Wednesday by Toledo-area representative Edna Brown.

Brown, a Democrat, had previously introduced a similar bill after a Toledo-area 17-year-old high school cheerleader was shot to death by a former boyfriend. The boyfriend had previously been given probation for striking Shynerra Grant in the face and pushing her down the stairs, breaking her jaw.

The bill didn't gain much momentum, but Brown decided to give it another try after advocates for victims of domestic violence told her about 18-year-old Johanna Orozco of Cleveland, who was shot in March. Orozco's ex-boyfriend, Juan Ruiz, was accused of raping her and was out on house arrest when police say that he shot Orozco in the face.

"It became clear that we needed to pursue this again," Brown said from her offices in Columbus Wednesday. "It's time for us really to get a push on."

Local Ohio House members Kenny Yuko, of Richmond Heights; Jennifer Brady, of Westlake; and Sandra Williams, Michael Debose and Eugene Miller, of Cleveland, are co-sponsoring the bill.

Alexandria Ruden, a domestic violence expert with the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, provided some guidance for what is included in the bill.

"I'm happy it's getting done," Ruden said. "This is a great step, and I think it's a recognition that we have to deal with teen dating violence."

Ruden said the bill should allow juvenile courts across the state the authority to look at the issue.

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