

Testimony to the Ohio House Education and Career Readiness Committee
House Bill 377: Sexual Abuse Prevention in Schools
Pamela Prisbylla
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Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, and Members of the Ohio House Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of House Bill 377.

My name is Pamela Prisbylla. I am a survivor of extreme early childhood sexual violence. I was so wounded by my experience that I did not break the silence until I was 46 years old. Even into late adulthood, I believed somehow this was my fault. At the age of 60, I contacted the rape crisis center sponsored by the American Red Cross, where I learned about the many myths of rape. It was also at this time that more aspects of my abuse came to the surface and continue to do so to this day.

It was through the American Red Cross that I was referred to the OAESV. I now sit on the survivor advisory council for OAESV.

Can you imagine believing you are responsible for countless acts of violence for over 60 years? How could this happen? Of course I was told I was responsible, and with torture my mind was made to believe it. All my life I have suffered from anxiety attacks, panic attacks, nightmares, insomnia, trances, and dissociative disorder. I have been in and out of therapy from the age of 21.

When abuse is happening in the home and in your community, how do you get the information you need to see the world or yourself in a different way? This is why I am an advocate for Erin's Law.

Just as we must be very diligent with cyber attacks, the same goes for perpetrators. Attacks happen to children sitting on someone's lap in church, during parades, in closets at birthday parties, during holidays with the parents in other rooms, in church basements, schools, and playgrounds. Sadly, statistics show that most abuses come from a family member or someone to be trusted such as friends, neighbors, boy scout leaders, coaches, teachers, clergy, and priests.

Our children deserve a fighting chance against the dangers before them. If we as a society refuse to look at or deal with this threat, by denial, we leave our children defenseless.

When I talk to my friends about Erin's law and education in the schools, most of them will say "I thought we already taught that." It is time to teach our children well.

I continue to heal, but can we really allow this abuse to continue for others, knowing how high the cost? Thank you. I will be happy to answer any questions the committee members may have.