



Proponent Testimony

Submitted to the Ohio House Health Committee

House Bill 321

Jane Conn, Executive Director, Abuse and Rape Crisis Shelter

October 15, 2019

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and Members of the Ohio House Health Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 321. As the Executive Director of the Abuse & Rape Crisis Shelter of Warren County (ARCS), I am keenly aware of the recent and most unfortunate situation that occurred in Springboro School District. I have had conversations with parents of children directly and indirectly impacted by the perverted and reckless actions that took place within a space reserved for safety and education. One teacher. Many young innocent lives. The probability of occurrence that many school names could be listed as the venue where vulnerable children were abused.

Under the umbrella of ARCS is the Violence Free Coalition of Warren County (VFC). The VFC promotes primary prevention of violence through education, building community resources, system change, and public awareness. It is within this framework that the VFC is able to spend four days with middle school and 5 days with high school students during their Health classes, in all eight Warren County School Districts. The primary goal is to provide youth with a forum to examine issues of dating abuse, sexual assault, sexual harassment, bullying, gender roles, and healthy relationships. However, data and studies support that it is imperative that we begin prevention education at the Elementary Level. Responding to this need, the VFC created new curriculum that launched in January, 2019 in two Warren County Elementary Schools and is now in seven out eight school districts.



Superintendents, Principals, Guidance Counselors, Teachers, Parents, and Community Members recognize that the provision of age appropriate instruction on sexual abuse and sexual violence is an imperative reality. Thirty-seven other States in our Country would also agree.

Prevention efforts are designed for broad scale change centered on individuals, as well as, changing the community environment, including systems and norms. It is our belief that when work is performed at several societal levels, preventing violence now, and in future generations is possible. Violence and abuse will always be present in our world and most likely, children will continue to receive their academic education through local educational systems. Erin's Law/House Bill 321 has the ability to prevent abuse from taking place within environments created to keep our children safe and protected. House Bill 321 will provide information, knowledge, and education to all students, but more importantly it will give a voice to the children most vulnerable.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane B. Conn

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