

Chairman Jones, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member Robinson Jr., and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 321 (Erin's Law).

I am a parent of one of the 88 girls who were molested in Springboro, OH by their gym teacher, John Austin Hopkins. I am also an Early Childhood Education teacher in the area. I feel compelled to express to you the importance of passing Erin's Law in Ohio. I truly believe the passage of this bill would have stopped this terrible act much sooner.

If you are not aware of this case, almost 100 first grade girls were molested by a trusted adult. None of those girls came forward. None. The only reason we found out that this was happening was due to the fact that a parent asked his daughter "What was the best part of your day?", and his daughter replied, "It was my turn to sit on Mr. Hopkins lap". The parent thought that was odd behavior for a teacher, reached out to the principal, looked at hundreds of hours of tape, and Mr. Hopkins was arrested.

Children should be educated, in an age appropriate way, about sexual abuse. Some may say it is up to the parent, however, I can tell you that many parents are NOT having these discussions at home. We teach children so many other ways to be safe in school... fire safety, gun safety, drug and alcohol safety, and more. This is something that should be added to the education of our children. We need to have conversations with our children about this. We need to make sure children are aware of the dangers they may encounter.

I for one never imagined getting a phone call from the police that my daughter had been molested by a teacher and that I needed to come identify her on video. So we have to start educating our children so that maybe, just maybe, if our students had been educated due to Erin's Law, someone would have come forward. One little girl may have recognized what was happening.. and it could have stopped him much, much sooner.

I implore you to consider passing Erin's Law in Ohio.

Once again, thank you, Chairman Jones and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, for your time and your consideration on this matter, I appreciate your service to Ohio and all that you do to keep our families safe!

Ashley Cable  
Resident of Springboro, OH  
Registered Voter