

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).

After seeing my neighbors and good friends suffer through the trial of their child being molested at the hands of teacher Austin Hopkins in the Springboro case, and the ensuing trial and testimony that this required, I feel compelled to speak out as both a friend, a parent of young children, and a teacher. I believe the passage of Erin's Law could have prevented this crime and others from happening. I am in strong support of children learning about sexual abuse, prevention of abuse, and its signs in school.

I disagree with the idea that parents should be responsible for teaching this content at homes, because as someone who has taught high school in Ohio for 15 years, I can tell you that this is not happening in the majority of homes. It's not that parents do not care about this, it's that it's a very difficult topic to broach with children of different ages. As parents, we were not taught this in school and often have no idea how to even begin this very scary conversation for fear of scaring our kids. I would far prefer to have my children learn about this topic from teachers who have been trained in a proven curriculum that is targeted to prevent abuse in the first place.

I am in support of Erin's Law and ask you to consider doing as so many other states have done by implementing this MUCH needed curriculum. Teachers are already teaching students about their bodies through required courses on health, nutrition, drug prevention, and more. Surely the prevention of sexual abuse is just as important-- and passing Erin's Law would make the statement that Ohio believe this to be true.

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!