

Dear Chairman Jones, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member Robinson Jr., and Members of the Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thanks for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 321.

My daughter – attended Clearcreek Elementary during the 2018-2019 school year as a first grade student. While attending the school she became the latest set of victims in a continual cycle of abuse by teacher’s that the public entrusts to educate their children and the future of our society.

She became 1 of 88 victims that were touched for the sexual gratification of one, John Austin Hopkins, who by a jury of his peers was found guilty of 34 out of 36 charges of Gross Sexual Imposition. In part that Law ORC 2907.05 reads, “No person shall knowingly touch the genitalia of another, when the touching is not through clothing, the other person IS LESS THAN TWELVE YEARS OF AGE, whether or not the offender knows the age of that person, and the touching is done with the intent to abuse, humiliate, harass, degrade, or AROUSE OR GRATIFY THE SEXUAL DESIRE OF ANY PERSON.

My daughter a 6 year old girl – being touched by a man for his own sexual gratification. We as parents do what we can to educate and teach our children what is safe touching and what is not. We were not fully prepared to discover a First Grade gym teacher was capable of this. I have a unique perspective on this – as my daughter was the one who first brought this into focus. My daughter told me wife after being picked up at the babysitter’s, “It was my turn to sit on the gym teachers lap!” She was so excited it was her turn... unknowing that it was her turn to be abused.

I would ask – how many more children is it going to take for our elected officials to take the needed steps to protect our children? Schools send homework home for children to work on lessons that were taught in school. Imagine schools doing the same for the parents? Imagine the change in narrative if these 88 girls of Springboro were taught to recognize this abuse. Imagine, having the school reinforce the behavior that each of these child’s parents have been teaching them at home. How many of these girls would have been saved? How quickly would this abuse have been caught?

Due to this abuse – my daughter as spent months in counseling. This counseling will be on-going for the foreseeable future. Her abuse will follow her for the rest of her life. Nothing she can do going forward will be able to change

that. The regression she has gone through; angry outburst, lack of trust with male figures (including her Father), bed wetting, not wanting to go to school, stomach pains, to name a few.

I would ask the State of Ohio – to act on this NOW. Education is so powerful! Our daughters deserve our protection. They deserve the education to ensure they are safe. Our children are our future. Why would we not do anything in our power to educate and protect them as they become the future leaders? I say again, 88 VICTIMS. All of them excited that this gym teacher picked them to be his “favorite.” All of them unknowingly abused. The video goes back 90 days. How many more children would have been caught – better yet, how many of these girls would have been saved if they received this additional education?

Dear Chairman Jones, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member Robinson Jr., and Members of the Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for your time and the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB321. Please pass this important legislation.