

WOMEN HELPING WOMEN

Serving ALL Survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking

WHW prevents gender-based violence and empowers all survivors.

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womenhelpingwomen.org

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Proponent Testimony
Ohio Primary and Secondary Education Committee
Erin's Law – HB105
Hope Carver, Vice President of Programming
Women Helping Women

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 105. My name is Hope Carver and I am the Vice President of Programming at Women Helping Women. Women Helping Women is a non-profit agency serving survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault and stalking in Southwest Ohio specifically Adams, Brown, Butler and Hamilton Counties. I have been involved in serving survivors of violence for almost 20 years and remain just as committed today to that work.

I am here on behalf of Women Helping Women to support "Erin's Law", or House Bill 105. As the committee well knows, House Bill 105 would require age-appropriate sexual abuse education to children in grades K-6 and sexual violence instruction to grades 7-12. House Bill 105 also requires school to train teachers on sexual abuse prevention and the Ohio Department of Education to provide model curricula for schools on these crucial and often neglected topics. This bill also allows schools to collaborate with local rape crisis programs who are experts in these areas instead of asking already over tasked full time teachers to act as experts in prevention. Many rape crisis centers already have an entire prevention team who are trained experts in leading discussion centered on age appropriate curriculum aimed at preventing sexual abuse and dating violence.

Last year, Women Helping Women provided evidence based violence prevention curriculum to 2,356 students in 6th through 12th grade in our service area. This curriculum is aimed at challenging social norms, identifying risk, and how to act as a bystander. This work is more important than ever as substantiated cases of childhood abuse in Ohio per year is over 30,000 and of those over 5,000 are related to sexual violence. These facts are devastating enough but we all know that these crimes are unreported for a variety of reasons.

For these reasons, House Bill 105 must pass for safety of our children, families and communities.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to present testimony on this important bill and am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

WHW believes that a world without gender-based violence is possible and that all members of our caring community can live in a world of equality, health and vitality.