

Proponent Testimony submitted to the  
Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee

House Bill 105

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Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 105.

I am a parent to 4 school age children in Ohio's western Hamilton County. Every week, in the news, I see cases of child sexual abuse and human trafficking. Child sexual abuse is a problem throughout Ohio. Child USA estimates that 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 13 boys will experience some form of sexual abuse before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is a silent epidemic. I was alarmed to learn that only 6-15% of cases are disclosed to authorities ([www.childusa.org](http://www.childusa.org)). As a state we are failing to protect our kids from sexual predators.

In August 2019 I learned that the pastor at my family's parish and my children's parochial school, in Senate district 8, had a troubling history with children in multiple Ohio counties. He was indicted for 9 counts of child rape. I also live in Oak Hills school district. Last week an Oak Hills district teacher was arrested for pandering child pornography. I can see from our own experience that predators are anywhere they can access children. Ohio needs a stronger safety net to protect kids from childhood sexual abuse. We need to update and strengthen a variety of Ohio's laws to protect children, not predators.

Erin's Law is a comprehensive approach to potentially prevent and stop abuse. We teach our kids about the dangers of fire, traffic safety, first aid and countless other things. Why wouldn't we educate them about sexual predators? A coordinated and age-appropriate plan gives kids the tools they need to potentially prevent or stop current abuse. An opt out would leave children vulnerable since 30% of kids are abused by family members ([www.d2l.org](http://www.d2l.org)). I hope the swift passage of Erin's Law will be the first of many steps in Ohio to protect children from sexual predators.

Study on the connection between CSA and trafficking

Ahrens KR, Katon W, McCarty C, Richardson LP, Courtney ME. (2012)  
Association between childhood sexual abuse and transactional sex in youth aging out of foster care.  
Child Abuse Negl. 36(1):75-80

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am available to answer questions at  
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