

House Bill 105
Age-appropriate Sexual Violence Prevention
Proponent Testimony

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Dear Chairman Brenner,

Mr. Chairman and other distinguished committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony for HB 105: Age-appropriate Sexual Violence Prevention. I am a health and physical education teacher at Whitmer High School (located in Toledo), a parent, and a member of the Ohio Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (OAHPERD) professional organization. I am testifying in support of sexual abuse prevention being part of the K-12 health education curriculum, but feel that the implementation must be done with coherence.

Having state standards would provide consistency for all students in Ohio to have a strong foundation in skill development across all health topics. Students who can analyze influences; demonstrate health literacy by accessing valid and reliable health information, products, and skills; use interpersonal communication skills; make health enhancing decisions; set SMART goals; practice health-enhancing behaviors; and advocate for behaviors that support personal, family, peer, school, and community health are equipped with the tools to stay safe. These skills also transfer across all health topic areas.

Sexual violence prevention is very important to include in a health education curriculum, but to ensure an effective outcome the approach must include functional knowledge and the process for skill development. Teaching a skill in health education takes time, just like learning a skill in a sport. Once a student practices and gains confidence in a skill, they can transfer this skill across any health topic area. What does the skill process in health education look like? First, the teacher must discuss the importance and relevance of the skill to the student. This allows the student to see the purpose in learning the skill. Second, the teacher will present the elements of the skill that supports the healthy behavior. The teacher will then model the skill for the students and allow sufficient time for the students to practice and rehearse the skill using real-life scenarios. The final step of the skill development process is for the teacher to provide feedback and reinforcement to the student.

As I see it, health education is the foundation for keeping a strong Ohio. To be able to provide this opportunity for all Ohio children, it is imperative to have state health standards and professional development for health educators. Having state standards would achieve the health outcomes we all want for our children to have long, healthy, and productive lives. The impact would go even further with reduction of child mortality; increased productivity in the workforce; and overall well-being of the family unit.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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