

Proponent Testimony submitted to the Ohio Senate Primary & 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:

My childhood school, St. Jude, a private school in suburban Cincinnati had a dark secret. Little boys were being raped by a music teacher, Geoff Drew, in the school and in the church during broad daylight in a public and occupied building. All the warning signs were ignored impart due to ignorance. There were no programs to teach children about body safety in our community in the late 80's and early 90's, so predators were free to prey upon children.

Then in 2018, Fr. Geoff Drew was assigned to run St. Ignatius School, the largest parochial elementary school in Ohio. My children were in 8th grade, 6th grade, 4th grade and kindergarten the year a now convicted child rapist ran the school. St. Ignatius's previous principal took child safety seriously and he had COCA (Council on Child Abuse) conduct personal body safety training at the school every year. In 2018, when Geoff Drew took over, the COCA classes were dropped from school without explanation. Drew was arrested in 2019 for 9 counts of child rape from assaults that took place at St. Jude. Drew was convicted in Hamilton County, Ohio in December 2021 of all 9 counts of child rape.

It appears when a predator runs a school they prefer the children remain ignorant of personal body safety.

Ohio needs a comprehensive approach to address sexual violence against children and this bill is an important step in protecting children. Please vote in support for HB 105, Erin's Law. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.