



1855 E. Dublin-Granville Road, Suite 301
Columbus, Ohio 43229
Phone: 614-781-9651
www.odvn.org

**Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee
Proponent Testimony for HB 105
Maria York, Policy Director
Ohio Domestic Violence Network
December 13, 2022**

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 support for HB 105, a critical bill for Ohio's schools and youth. HB 105, or Erin's Law, would require schools in our state to provide age-appropriate instruction on sexual abuse, train school employees they can better detect child sexual abuse, and inform parents and caretakers of the warning signs of child sexual abuse.

As Ohio's federally designated domestic violence coalition, the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) advances the principle that all people have the right to an oppression and violence-free life and advocates for changes in our economic, social, and political systems to empower communities statewide to prevent abuse. ODVN represents 76 local domestic violence organizations across the state. In 2021, ODVN programs sheltered more than 9,118 survivors, including 3,965 children, and provided 80,706 survivors and children with services.¹

1 in 10 children experience sexual abuse before their 18th birthday.² If you add up the number of children who suffer from childhood cancer, asthma and diabetes, that number is smaller than the number of children who suffer child sexual abuse. It is epidemic in its portions, and sexual abuse in children is not limited to victimization from a stranger. National statistics show that about 40% of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by a family member.³ Unfortunately, many children in our member shelters and programs have experienced sexual abuse. Advocates at these programs work closely with the non-offending parent and the relevant systems to provide resources for the child's safety and healing.

In 2019, ODVN's prevention team released findings on Ohio's public health status. From the 2018 data they analyzed, Ohio ranked 28th out of 50 states for child maltreatment, including sexual abuse.⁴ The effects of child maltreatment can have lasting impacts on children's physical, mental, and social health, which makes prevention and early intervention crucial. According to research known as the ACE study⁵, when a child has one or more adverse childhood experiences, the effects can include long-term negative outcomes. These can include risks of intimate partner violence later in life, sexually transmitted

¹ For calendar year 2021. [ODVNFactSheet June2022](#). Accessed December 2022.

² [Stewards of Children® - Darkness to Light \(d2l.org\)](#) Accessed December 2022. For more information on the Stewards of Children training curriculum, please visit: [D2L-Stewards-of-Children-One-Pager-2020.pdf](#)

³ [Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement \(ojp.gov\)](#). Accessed December 2022.

⁴ For more information, including a 2-page fact sheet on the findings, please visit [Child Maltreatment \(odvn.org\)](#)

⁵ [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

infections, maternal and child health problems (including teen pregnancy, pregnancy complications, and fetal death), involvement in sex trafficking, and a wide range of chronic diseases and leading causes of death such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and suicide.⁶ The U.S. total lifetime economic costs associated with child maltreatment was approximately \$428 billion in 2015—a higher cost burden than other public health problems.⁷

On behalf of the Ohio Domestic Violence Network and its 76 member programs, we would like to thank Representative Lipps and Representative Kelly for their dedication to children and for recognizing the importance of appropriate school-age prevention for sexual abuse. Thirty-seven states around the country have enacted Erin’s Law, leaving Ohio in the minority of states that do not provide this protective information to children and families. ODVN strongly encourages the passage of HB 105, Ohio’s children deserve protection.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ [Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect Rival Other Major Public Health Problems](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)