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Brigid Kelly State Representative Sponsor Testimony HB 105

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and the members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 105 also known as Erin's Law. Erin's Law will mandate child sexual abuse and sexual violence prevention education in schools.

The bill requires annual age-appropriate instruction in child sexual abuse prevention in grades kindergarten through six and age-appropriate instruction in dating and sexual violence prevention education for grades seven through twelve. The bill also requires each school district, educational service center, community school, and STEM school to incorporate training on child sexual abuse into its required in-service training for teachers, nurses, counselors, school psychologists, and administrators. This training must count toward the satisfaction of requirements for professional development required by the district, service center, or school.

Additionally, the bill requires the Ohio Department of Education to provide information on free curricula that addresses sexual violence prevention in order to assist schools in developing their own curricula.

I also want to note that during the Committee process in the House, we added in an amendment that states school districts are required to notify parents that their children will be receiving this education and that parents are able to examine the instructional materials upon request.

In total, 37 other states have passed Erin's Law. We see this law working day after day. Just a few months ago, a New York elementary school principal was charged with 11 total counts of first and second-degree sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. Students came forward to their

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parents after just one of these lessons mandated by Erin’s Law. Similarly, a young girl confided in the police officer who was instructing the class that she had been a victim of sexual abuse for years. This brave young girl also reported that the perpetrator had been abusing another young girl as well. That man was arrested and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

These cases are 2 out of hundreds! Not only will this law protect children by providing them with the knowledge and resources to come forward, but it also aides law enforcement and others in effectively addressing these perpetrators.

This bill passed the House Committee and the House Floor with overwhelming support.

I will now pass it over to my Joint Sponsor Rep. Lipps to talk more specifically about the need for this legislation.