



Call to Action – Erin’s Law

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II. **What is Erin’s Law?**

Inspired by a survivor of child sexual abuse and created with evidence-based practices, Erin’s Law is legislation seeking state governments to require schools to provide age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention education to students, train school personnel on child sexual abuse detection, and inform parents and guardians of child sexual abuse warning signs.

The national initiative provides flexibility for individual state legislatures to design¹ a bill that meets their citizens’ needs. In Ohio, Representatives Scott Lipps (R), from a rural district, and Brigid Kelly (D), from an urban district, introduced Ohio’s Erin’s Law legislation with the following specifications:

- Schools must provide age-appropriate sexual abuse education in grades K-6;
- Schools must provide age-appropriate sexual violence education in grades 7-12;
- Schools must train teachers and school personnel on sexual abuse prevention and detection;

¹ This point will become important if a lawmaker or interested party feels that states should retain autonomy over education practices.

- The Ohio Department of Education must provide free model curricula for schools on these topics

III. Which States have passed Erin's Law?

Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia are among the 37 states that have already passed Erin's Law. Ohio and Kentucky remain outliers regionally in stalling to pass this critical legislation. Curriculum mandated by Erin's Law has spread throughout the nation since first appearing in schools in 2009.

IV. Data on Child Sexual Abuse

Nationally, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before they turn 18. Only just over 33 percent of child sexual abuse victims disclose. Most child sexual abuse survivors are abused by someone they know. The abuse of pre-existing trust, family connections, or school/extra-curricular authority fosters confusion and fear that prevents children from reporting their abuse.

Per the Ohio Children's Trust Fund, the state received 9,040² reports of child sexual abuse in 2017. Compared to Ohio's child population in the same year of 2,628,477, this reporting rate demonstrates the urgent need prevention education in schools that will enable children to recognize abuse and tell an adult who can help make it stop.

V. The Ask

Ohio children deserve the same level of prevention education that their peers in Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and 33 other states receive.

- Ask your representative to support passage of Erin's Law
- Ask your senator to introduce a companion bill
- Write to all members of the House Civil Justice Committee in support of voting Erin's Law out of committee for full consideration by the House of Representatives

VI. Potential Impact of Additional Community Partners

Ohio lawmakers have made numerous inquiries about Erin's Law, seeking to determine the following:

- If sexual abuse prevention education will inappropriately expose young children to sexual concepts; and
- If sexual abuse prevention education should be left in the control of parents and families

These questions reflect a lack of deeper understanding about the culture that allows child sexual abuse to continue, and the huge number of persons who come into contact with survivors in its aftermath. Engaging with community partners will assist lawmakers in understanding the broad range of support for increased prevention education on this topic. In particular, recognition from medical

² Ohio Children's Trust Fund, <https://octf.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/octf/what-we-do/the-problem/ohio-child-abuse-and-neglect-stats> (citing Public Children Services Organization of Ohio Factbook).

professionals, mental health professionals, schools, prosecutors, and law enforcement will be highly persuasive to lawmakers.

VII. Engaging Community Partners

When determining which parties to engage, think critically about who you believe will support the legislation sufficient to express their opinion to the legislature. The best way to engage support is to first meet with individuals with whom you have a positive working relationship. Think about members of other professions who call upon your team for help with child sexual abuse matters. Meet with a small group in your team to identify possible partners, and think about local officials with whom you may be comfortable discussing Erin's Law.

Example List:

- Law Enforcement
 - Municipal
 - Know Well:
 - Are Comfortable Approaching
 - County
 - Know Well:
 - Are Comfortable Approaching
- School District
 - Middle School
 - Prevention Partnerships:
 - Other Affiliations:
 - High School
 - Prevention Partnerships:
 - Other Affiliations:
- Medical Professionals
 - SANE Nurses
 - Are they affiliated with professional association?
 - Hospital Association Leadership
- Local Government
 - City Counsel
 - Mayor
 - City Manager

As time is at a premium, we recommend focusing on community partners with whom you feel comfortable communicating this issue. It is extremely helpful to speak with community members who have seen the impact of prevention education and/or the consequences of undetected child sexual abuse.

a. Select Action Steps, Prepare for Conversations

Engaging in this process should be done in a manner that reflects your schedule and time constraints. Conversations can easily take place with community members you know over coffee or a

meal, while other actions may require more formality. Once you have determined who you will request meetings with, we advise reviewing this packet and talking points, focusing on ways in which the funding supports important services and progress in the individual's professional area, for example:

Meeting	Example Script for Meeting Request (will vary by relationship to party)	Example Meeting Focus Areas	Tools to Bring
City Government Official	<p>"My name is ___, I am calling to request a meeting with ____ (Mayor/City Manager/Council Member) or a member of their staff to discuss Erin's Law (House Bill 321). As you know, House Bill 321 seeks to mandate age-appropriate child sexual abuse prevention education. At ____ (program name), we work with both preventionists and survivors of child sexual abuse. We know from experience that this strategy is necessary and effective. We would like to talk about ways in which our city government can express support to our state representative and senator. Our meeting will focus directly on the bill's specific requirements and our experience working on this issue.</p>	<p>Community Safety</p> <p>Any increase in adults disclosing child sexual abuse</p> <p>Indication that adult survivors are not able to pursue prosecution and qualitative data on the life long consequences of child sexual abuse.</p>	<p>Data in your community about child sexual abuse.</p> <p>Literature and data on prevention strategies and their scientific basis.</p>
Law Enforcement	<p>"My name is ___, I am calling to request a meeting with ____ (Specific Officer) to talk about ____ (Program Name) and the legislature's current strategy to help victims of child sexual abuse. Erin's Law seeks to mandate age appropriate child sexual abuse curriculum in schools – a strategy we believe is needed and effective - and we would like to talk about ways that the law enforcement officers we work with can express support to our state representative and senator. Our meeting will focus directly on the bill's specific requirements and how we feel it will increase reporting and aid in successful investigations and prosecutions.</p>	<p>Community Safety</p> <p>Reporting Rates</p> <p>Specific Experiences Shared with Law Enforcement</p> <p>Shared Goals with Law Enforcement</p> <p>Increased difficulty for law enforcement investigations and prosecutions created by failure to educate children on sexual abuse</p>	<p>Data in your community about child sexual abuse.</p> <p>Literature about prevention education and its scientific basis.</p>
Nurses/Medical Professionals	<p>"My name is ___, I am calling to request a meeting with ____ (Specific Professional or Legislative Liaison) to talk about the current legislative proposal to require child sexual abuse in Ohio schools. We believe based on our work with survivors that this strategy is necessary and effective. We</p>	<p>Survivor Safety and Health Outcomes</p>	<p>Prevention Literature</p>

	would love the opportunity to meet with you about the bill's specific strategies and your potential willingness to provide supporting to the legislature.		
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b. Provide Support Opportunities

The most important strategy a program can employ is making support easy for participants. For that reason, we are providing the following methods of support:

Letter Option	Should the party you are meeting with agree to provide support, provide the letter attached to the email containing this document as Appendix A. It is most useful if you fill in as much information as possible for them (their name and address), and the name/email address of the lawmaker to be receiving the information. We advise assessing their support and emailing the template letter only after they have committed to supporting in that manner.
Call Option	If the party you are meeting with is more comfortable calling your law makers to express support, please email them the script in Appendix B after your meeting, along with the name and telephone numbers of the lawmakers they will be calling.

VIII. Timeline

The 133rd General Assembly will formally end on December 31, 2020. Thus, if the bill does not pass both the Senate and the House of Representatives before that date, it will have to be reintroduced – which may require securing new sponsors. Thus, support efforts should take place in earnest starting as soon as possible, ideally in early March 2020. Initial outreach should be directed to the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, the contact information for which can be found in Appendix D, and then to a program's individual members.

IX. Storytelling

Where quantitative data can help justify legislative change, personal narratives create a compelling reason for lawmakers to act. In the case of victim advocates, it is important to (1) select a narrative that aligns with the purpose of the bill (for example, a narrative about a survivor of child sexual abuse who would have been able to identify the behaviors as abuse if Erin's Law had been in place); (2) obtain the survivor's consent for sharing information; (3) maintain survivor privacy; and (4) avoid

naming or providing any sort of identifying information³ about the perpetrator. It is also appropriate to demonstrate trends by weaving together multiple narratives, as long as all survivors give consent to having the story shared.

OAESV is happy to provide technical assistance in making sure all narratives remain confidential and respect survivor privacy and autonomy.

X. Letters to the Editor

Should a member of your staff be interested in writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper to increase awareness and local support, please contact OAESV for guidance and support in messaging and connecting with impactful publications.

³ Inadvertent identification, even if names are not used, can result in retaliatory litigation or other actions against the survivor, advocate, or rape crisis program.

Appendix A Template Letters of Support

[Agency Letterhead Here, If Applicable]

Return Address Here

Date

Representative _____

77 S High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

EMAIL ADDRESS FOR RECIPIENT

Re: Support House Bill 321

Representative _____:

My name is _____, and I live in your district. I am writing to support House Bill 321, more commonly known as Erin's Law. Erin's Law mandates that Ohio's public schools provide age appropriate prevention education on sexual abuse and sexual violence to students, parents, and educators. Erin's Law is in place in 37 states. All children in _____ (name of town) deserve the protection of informed peers, teachers, and families – the same protection children in the majority of schools across the country receive.

Erin's Law prevents abuse and increases detection of existing abuse. Please help this bill become law.

Sincerely,

[Sender Name]

[Agency Letterhead Here, If Applicable]

Return Address Here

Date

Senator _____

1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

EMAIL ADDRESS FOR RECIPIENT

Re: *Introduce Erin's Law*

Senator _____:

My name is _____, and I live in your district. I am writing to express my support House Bill 321, more commonly known as Erin's Law, and to request that you introduce companion legislation in the Senate. Erin's Law mandates that Ohio's public schools provide age appropriate prevention education on sexual abuse and sexual violence to students, parents, and educators. Erin's Law is in place in 37 states. All children in _____ (name of town) deserve the protection of informed peers, teachers, and families – the same protection children in the majority of schools across the country receive.

Erin's Law prevents abuse and increases detection of existing abuse. Please introduce a companion to Rep. Lipp's and Rep. Kelly's House Bill 321.

Sincerely,

[Sender Name]

Appendix B Call Scripts

HOUSE MEMBER:

“Hello,

My name is _____ and I am a constituent in your district. I wholeheartedly support House Bill 321, Erin’s Law, and ask that you vote for its passage and encourage introduction in the Senate. Ohio children deserve the sexual abuse prevention curriculum the bill provides. Our children’s safety cannot wait.”

SENATE MEMBER:

“Hello,

My name is _____ and I live in your district. I am reaching out to ask you to support introduction of Erin’s Law in the Senate. Ohio remains one of just 13 states without child sexual abuse prevention curricula in schools – our neighbors in Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia have all embraced this legislation. Our children deserve the same. House Bill 321 is currently pending in the House, and a companion bill will ensure this critical and research-based practice becomes law.”

Appendix C Finding Your Lawmaker

The Ohio Legislature provides an online tool for finding your Senator and Representative. To access this tool, please visit <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislators/district-maps>. Once there, scroll past the House and Senate District Maps, and enter your information in either the “Search by Address” or “Search by Zip Code” boxes.

Appendix D Contact Information for House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

Before the entire House of Representatives can consider the bill, it must pass a vote in the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee. The members below have the discretion to support the bill or vote to block from further consideration. Voicing your support to these key lawmakers is critical to Erin's Law's future.

- Chair: Don Jones, (614) 644-8728, Rep95@ohiohouse.gov
- Vice Chair: Susan Manchester, (614) 466-6344, Rep84@ohiohouse.gov
- Ranking Member: Phillip Robinson, Jr., (614) 644-6041, Rep06@ohiohouse.gov
- Members:
 - Sara Carruthers, (614) 644-6721, Rep51@ohiohouse.gov
 - Eric Crawley, (614) 466-8010, Rep26@ohiohouse.gov
 - Robert Cupp, (614) 466-9624, Rep04@ohiohouse.gov
 - Catherine Ingram, (614) 466-1645, Rep32@ohiohouse.gov
 - J. Kyle Kohler, (614) 466-2038, Rep79@ohiohouse.gov
 - Gayle Manning, (614) 644-5076, Rep55@ohiohouse.gov
 - Joseph A. Miller III, (614) 466-5141, Rep56@ohiohouse.gov
 - John Patterson, (614) 466-1405, Rep99@ohiohouse.gov
 - Bill Roemer, (614) 644-5085, Rep38@ohiohouse.gov
 - J. Todd Smith, (614) 466-2960, Rep43@ohiohouse.gov
 - Lisa Sobecki, (614) 644-6017, Rep45@ohiohouse.gov
 - Jason Stephens, (614) 466-1366, Rep93@ohiohouse.gov
 - Fred Strahorn, (614) 466-1607, Rep39@ohiohouse.gov

Appendix E Contact Information for House and Senate Leadership

Senate

- President: Senator Larry Obhof
 - obhof@ohiosenate.gov
 - 614-466-7505
 - 1 Capitol Square, 2nd Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- President Pro Tempore: Senator Bob Peterson
 - peterson@ohiosenate.gov
 - 614-466-8156
 - 1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Majority Floor Leader: Senator Matt Huffman
 - mhuffman@ohiosenate.gov
 - 614-466-7584
 - 1 Capitol Square, 2nd Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Majority Whip: Senator Jay Hottinger
 - hottinger@ohiosenate.gov
 - 614-466-5838
 - 1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Minority Leader: Senator Kenny Yuko
 - yuko@ohiosenate.gov
 - 614-466
 - 1 Capitol Square, 3rd Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Assistant Minority Leader: Senator Cecil Thomas
 - thomas@ohiosenate.gov
 - 614-466-5980
 - 1 Capitol Square, 2nd Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Minority Whip: Senator Sean J. O'Brien
 - obrien@ohiosenate.gov
 - 614-466-7182
 - 1 Capitol Square, 2nd Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Assistant Minority Whip: Senator Sandra R. Williams
 - williams@ohiosenate.gov
 - 614-466-4857
 - 1 Capitol Square, Ground Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215

House

- Speaker of the House: Representative Larry Householder
 - Rep72@ohiohouse.gov
 - 614-466-2500
 - 77 S High Street, 14th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Speaker Pro Tempore: Representative Jim Butler
 - Rep41@ohiohouse.gov

- 614-466-6008
 - 77 S High Street, 14th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Majority Floor Leader: Representative Bill Seitz
 - Rep30@ohiohouse.gov
 - 614-466-8258
 - 77 S High Street, 14th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Assistant Majority Floor Leader: Representative Anthony DeVitis
 - Rep36@ohiohouse.gov
 - 614-466-1790
 - 77 S High Street, 11th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Majority Whip: Representative Jay Edwards
 - Rep94@ohiohouse.gov
 - 614-466-2158
 - 77 S High Street, 14th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Assistant Majority Whip: Representative Laura Lanese
 - Rep23@ohiohouse.gov
 - 614-466-9690
 - 77 S High Street, 14th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Minority Leader: Representative Emilia Strong Sykes
 - Rep34@ohiohouse.gov
 - 614-466-3100
 - 77 S High Street, 14th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Assistant Minority Leader: Representative Kristin Boggs
 - Rep18@ohiohouse.gov
 - 614-466-1896
 - 77 S High Street, 14th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Minority Whip: Representative Paula Hicks Hudson
 - Rep44@ohiohouse.gov
 - 614-466-1401
 - 77 S High Street, 14th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Assistant Minority Whip: Representative Richard D. Brown
 - Rep20@ohiohouse.gov
 - 614-644-6002
 - 77 S High Street, 10th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215