

**ERIN MERRY**  
A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

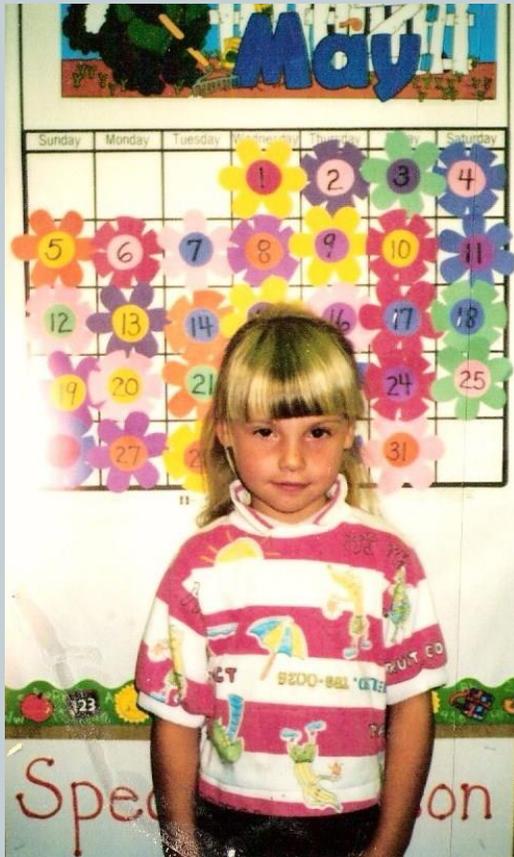
MSW, Founder Erin's Law

# SILENT EPIDEMIC



- Estimated 42 million survivors in America of child sexual abuse.
- 3 million of those are children.
- That could fill 46 national football stadiums.
- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused by the age of 18.

1991



# WARNING SIGNS



- Anger
- Behavior issues in school.
- IEP
- Emergency room
- Avoiding sleepovers

# ABUSE CONTINUES

Moved in 1994 for abuse to end.

Moving got me that much closer to the next abuser in my life.

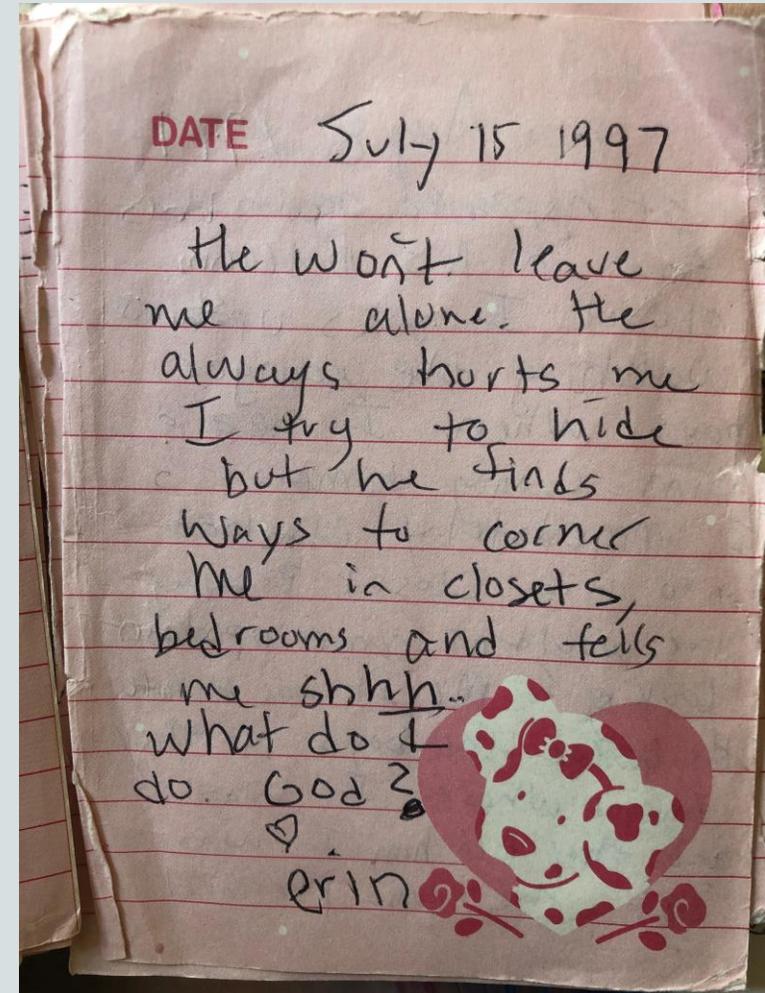
Threatened to keep it a secret

Nobody would believe me

Abuse began in 1996 and ended in 1998 when I finally told someone what was happening.



# DEAR DIARY



# WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE IN KIDS & TEENS

- **Nightmares**
- **Bed wetting**
- **Change in appetite**
- **Fear of certain people, places, activities**
- **Mood swings: Rage, Anger, Fear, anxiety, insecure or withdrawn**
- **Aggression**
- **Feeling shameful or guilty**
- **Change in Academics**
- **Avoiding someone they never had a problem with.**
- **Inappropriate clothing such as long sleeve shirts in warm weather.**
- **Acting out or disruptive behavior**
- **Coming to school too early or not wanting to go home.**
- **Eating Disorders**
- **Self Injury**
- **Drug and Alcohol Abuse**
- **Promiscuous activity**
- **Running away**
- **Suicidal**
- **Isolating oneself**
- **Resisting removing clothes when appropriate times (bedtime, bath time)**
- **Running away from home**
- **Suicidal thoughts**
- **Acting out sexually**
- **Exhibits adult sexual behaviors, knowledge, and language.**

# CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER



Northwest Cook County Illinois Children's Advocacy Center

New York State Children's Alliance has 47 centers. An excellent resource for schools.



## IF CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE TO YOU

- Do not act shocked
- Praise the child by telling them they did the right thing by telling
- Do not pry the child for information. Do not ask leading questions.
- Let child know they are safe now
- Make the child as comfortable as possible
- Reassure child this is not their fault
- Explain that the school has to notify the police
- Do NOT contact the parents if a child discloses abuse
- A parent may try and have their child recant the abuse they reported.
- Parent may take off with child and go into hiding
- Parent may confront abuser if known before police are involved
- Go directly to your principal and contact law enforcement.

# LIFE AFTER ABUSE

- Experienced PTSD nightmares, flashbacks, panic attacks.
- Family divided and supporting my cousin.
- Self-harm and a suicide attempt.
- Confronting cousin in letter.
- 7 months of corresponding
- Finding my voice and letting go of shame.
- Forgiveness
- Turning diary into a book.
- Breaking silence about early abuse.



# ERIN'S LAW

DATE April 9 1997  
Way home I sobbed,  
over and over in my  
head I thought about  
what just happened.  
In school a guy  
called officer friendly  
teach us about stranger  
Never answer door  
When parents gone,  
I thought people  
like [redacted]  
Jumped out  
of bushes



DATE  
at night and attacked  
gov. I never warned about  
my own family. They don't  
teach you that in school.  
At dinner tonight I  
didn't say much. I  
was too upset but  
tried not to show it.  
Mom noticed and asked  
What was wrong. I  
told her it was  
nothing but she thinks  
its to do with eyes.  
I just want to wake

DATE  
up from this horrible  
nightmare. I feel  
so alone and confused.  
Just want it to  
stop.

# ERIN'S LAW

## 10 YEARS OF PROTECTING KIDS



# WHAT ARE WE TEACHING KIDS IN SCHOOL

Tornado, Bus, Fire Drills

Bully intervention

Internet safety

Lock down drills

Stranger Danger

DARE

Suicide Prevention



# ERIN'S LAW



# ERIN'S LAW

Requiring schools to teach personal body safety.

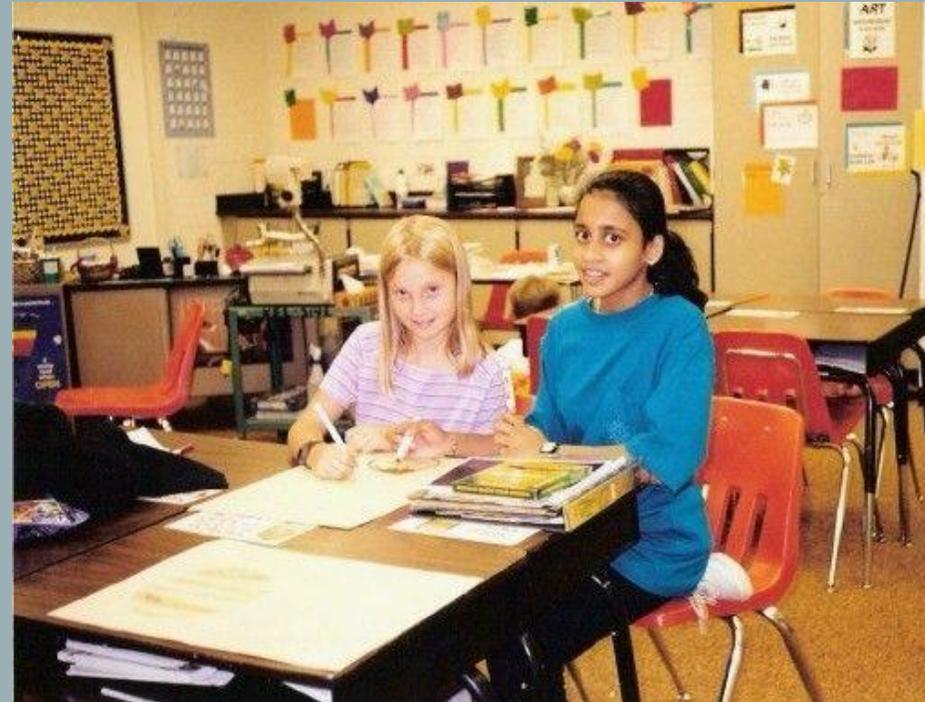
Educating students on the differences between safe and unsafe touches and safe and unsafe secrets.

Identify safe adults to report to.

Training staff on sexual abuse prevention

How to properly handle disclosures

Encourage schools to hold parent nights.



# OPRAH



# ILLINOIS TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Erin's Law Task force passed in February 14, 2011. Can be found online.

First bill created a task force to study child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse prevention education should be taught in grades pre-K through 12. "Best Practices" should be included in this instruction.

Training for school administrators should be amended to include child sexual abuse as a selective strand under the Illinois Administrator Academy.

Child sexual abuse training should be provided as a certified professional development unit (CPDU) for certified non-administrative school personnel.

# ERIN'S LAW ILLINOIS

State senator "It will never get passed."

Testifying to House Education  
Committee response.

10 months Task Force

New Bill introduced 2012

January 24, 2013 Governor Quinn signed  
Erin's Law requiring all k-12<sup>th</sup> grade  
students be taught Erin's law starting  
2013-2014.



# CHALLENGES

Uncomfortable subject

Unfunded mandate

Sex Education

Should be left in the home to be taught.

Adults need to be educated not students.

Federal bill mandating not an option.

## FEDERAL BILL

US Senator Gillibrand (NY) introduced federal bill.

December 2015 President Obama signed the federal version of Erin's Law under the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Accessing these funds?



GET CELEBRITIES INVOLVED AND MEDIA



NEW YORK  
2012

Senator Klein

Assemblyman Dinowitz

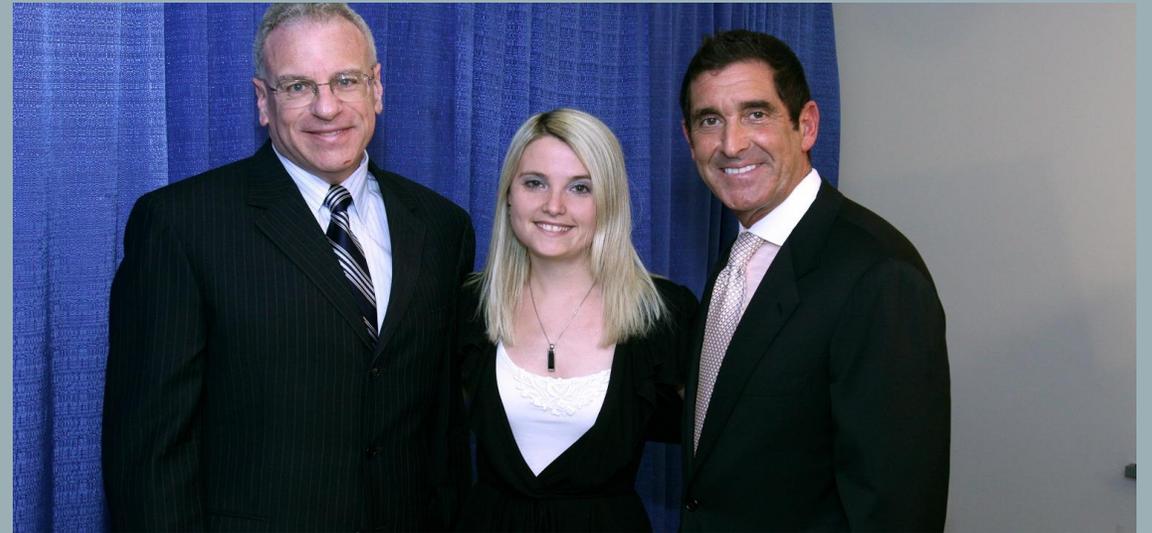
April 2012 Senate passes Erin's Law 57-1

Assembly Education Committee bill dies 2012

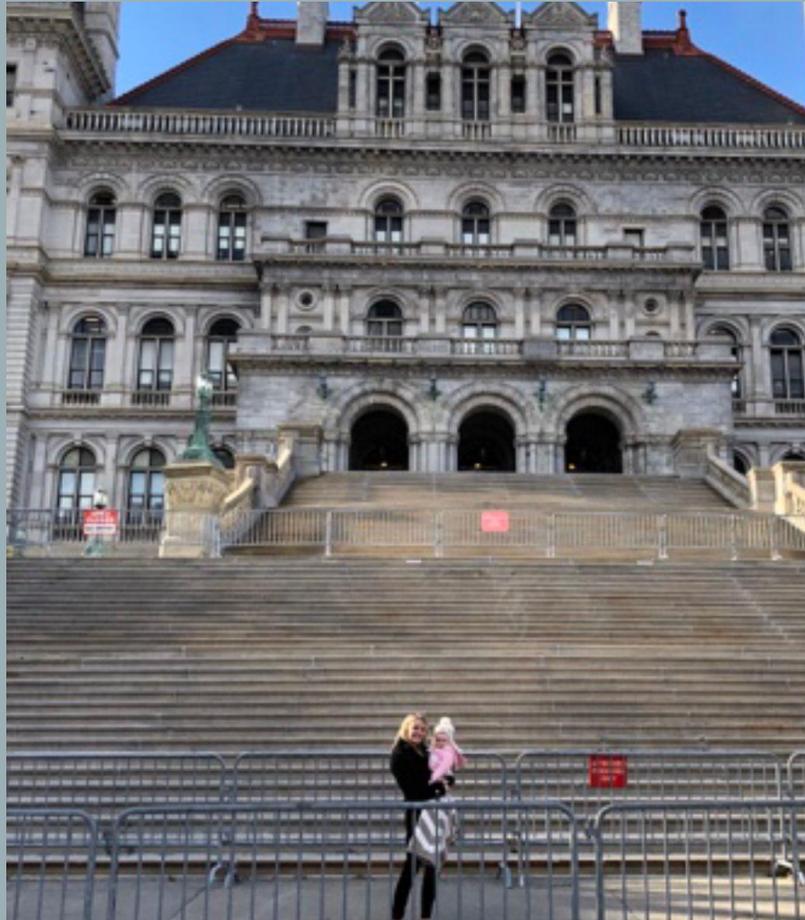
2011-2018 Bill introduced. Passed Senate every  
year killed Assembly every year.

Representative Cathy Nolan

Never give up on children.



# 7 YEARS LATER BACK TO NEW YORK



2019  
NEW EDUCATION CHAIRMAN  
MICHAEL BENEDETTO



JUNE 20 2019



NEW YORK  
ERIN'S LAW

2 months after Erin's Law passed Governor Cuomo had still not signed it.

Missed deadline of July 1<sup>st</sup>

Went to the media.

\$1.50 - NYDailyNews.com SPORTS FINAL Monday, August 19, 2019

# DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

## WHAT'S THE HOLDUP?

PAGES 4-5



Erin Merryn (left), the mumpsake for a law mandating the teaching of sex-abuse prevention in schools, is pressing Gov. Cuomo to sign bill passed by state legislators.

Gov urged to sign 'Erin's Law' to prevent abuse

**PLAY EARLY**  
**PLAY LATE**  
Come on consecutive days for max Free Play.

EARLY BIRD  
10 am - 4 pm

NIGHT OWL  
10 pm - 4 am

PLAY DINE UNWIND

Responsible Gaming  
CASINO  
NEW YORK CITY

## ERIN'S LAW NEW YORK

August 28<sup>th</sup> 2019 Governor Cuomo signs Erin's Law.  
Starting July 2020-2021 school year all kids K-8<sup>th</sup> grade  
will be taught Erin's Law in New York.

New York became the 37<sup>th</sup> state.

### GOV. SIGNS 'ERIN'S LAW'



"MANY CHILDREN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF THESE HORRIFIC CRIMES DON'T HAVE THE INFORMATION OR EMOTIONAL TOOLS THEY NEED TO FIGHT BACK. WE ARE GIVING OUR MOST VULNERABLE NEW YORKERS A VOICE."

▪ **GOV. ANDREW CUOMO**  
(D) NEW YORK

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The Swimsuit Lesson

The Right Touch

Some Secrets Should Never be Kept

Gorp's Secret

Some Parts are not for Sharing

My Body Belongs to Me

Balicy Bee Believes

I said NO

My Body is Special and Belongs to Me

Fred the Fox Shouts NO

The Birthday Suit

Sara Sue Learns to Yell and Tell

Tootles the Turtle

## ERIN'S LAW DURING COVID

Child abuse and domestic violence is skyrocketing during COVID. School safest place for many kids.

Having social workers and school staff put together educational videos on personal body safety that can be shown at home.

Giving parents recommended list of books to read with children and tips on how to talk to kids about this.

Check in with families with higher risk of abuse and violence to be going on in the home.

If your school is going back in the Fall get Erin's Law lesson done right at the start of the year in the event that things go back to E-Learning.

# KIDS IN THE KNOW

- **Kids in the Know (Canada) K-9<sup>th</sup> , longer: 6-8 lessons**
- Kids in the Know can be purchased for an individual grade level program or as kits with all supporting resources. In 2018 prices ranged from \$35 (CAD) for an individual grade program to \$310 (CAD) for a full kit from Kindergarten to Grade 10 with all supporting resources (lessons, activity sheets, posters, puppets, storybooks, etc.) Each lesson is designed to work in classroom setting – where time spent on the lesson and activities can be adjusted as needed. On average, a grade level will consist of 6-8 lessons, each with a delivery time of approximately 45 minutes. [www.kidsintheknow.ca](http://www.kidsintheknow.ca)
- Play It Safe Pre-k-12<sup>th</sup> [www.playitsafe.org](http://www.playitsafe.org), (Spanish Pre-k-2nd) [dmayfield@womenscentertc.org](mailto:dmayfield@womenscentertc.org)
- Safe@Last k-12<sup>th</sup> [www.besafeatlast.com](http://www.besafeatlast.com), [kjanecek@sacenter.org](mailto:kjanecek@sacenter.org)
- Second Step K-5<sup>th</sup> grade [www.cfchildren.org](http://www.cfchildren.org), [jduffell@cfchildren.org](mailto:jduffell@cfchildren.org)

# PLAY IT SAFE

- Play it Safe! is an Evidence Informed, specialized, age appropriate child sexual abuse risk reduction program for children ages pre-school through 12th grade, as well as their parents, teachers and caregivers. Each grade level program includes an age appropriate video and script.
- Reduces risk by teaching children to identify abusive behavior, and provides tools children need to be safe including specific, age appropriate actions to take in threatening situations.
- Each grade level program can be purchased as a hard copy with DVD and Script or online only. The cost for Pre-K through 2nd grade hard copies, which also includes online streaming for a year, cost \$299 each. They come with a set of Joe and Suzy dolls and 25 coloring books in either English or Spanish. Online cost for these grade levels is \$199
- The total hard copy cost for all 14 programs is \$3,186 plus shipping. For online purchases only,
- Contact Diane Mayfield [dmayfield@womenscentertc.org](mailto:dmayfield@womenscentertc.org) [www.playitsafe.org](http://www.playitsafe.org)

## BE SAFE AT LAST

- Safe@Last is a sequential personal safety curriculum that empowers students in kindergarten through sixth grade by providing critical skills and tools to stay safe and avoid dangerous situations. Each lesson builds on and reinforces the skills learned in previous sessions with opportunities for students to practice each learned skill. The program includes age-appropriate learning techniques such as role-playing, music, games, stories, and an interactive online workbook to enhance the learning process for each individual student.
- The program cost \$125 per school per year.
- [www.besafeatlast.com](http://www.besafeatlast.com)

## SECOND STEP

- The Second Step Suite provides a simplified approach for schools to create and sustain safe, supportive learning environments that optimize budgets and results. Our fully integrated framework effectively combines social-emotional learning with bullying prevention and child protection to form a cohesive foundation for whole-school success.
- Research-based, sequenced curriculum teaches essential life and learning skills.
- Media-rich content engages students and reinforces positive behavior.
- Fully scripted lessons are easy to integrate into the day.
- Take-home materials bolster family engagement and support.
- Interactive training expedites implementation and alignment.
- Early Learning, Kindergarten, Grade 1-5 \$199.00  
Early Learning and Graders K-5 bundle \$1,279  
Grades K-5 bundle \$1,099
- <http://www.cfchildren.org/child-protection>

## CHILD SAFETY MATTERS (MONIQUE BURR FOUNDATION)

- *MBF Child Safety Matters* is a comprehensive, evidence-based curriculum for elementary school students in grades K-5. The program educates and empowers children and all relevant adults with information and strategies to prevent, recognize, and respond appropriately to bullying, cyberbullying, all types of abuse, and digital abuse dangers.
- It is presented in two comprehensive lessons ranging from 35-55 minutes (or in four shorter lessons) by trained facilitators in classrooms. Facilitators present turnkey scripts along with engaging, interactive PowerPoints including lecture, group discussion, skills-practice activities, videos, and games.
- K-5 Digital Bundle \$1500 or \$300.00 per grade level.
- The K-5 Digital Bundle includes a three-year subscription to the Facilitator Portal with access to all needed program materials for grades K-5, and includes Facilitator training and Portal access for 6 Facilitators.
- Stacy Pendarvis, MSW, MA | Program Director [spendarvis@moniqueburrfoundation.org](mailto:spendarvis@moniqueburrfoundation.org)

## SAFE SMARTER KIDS (LAURENS KIDS)

- *Safer, Smarter Kids* includes five to eight, 30-minute age-appropriate lessons regarding personal safety and how to ask for help when a situation makes you uncomfortable. The children then have the opportunity to practice these concepts through in-class activities.
- Each grade level's theme focuses on developing skills for staying safe as it relates to the expansion of a child's world and aligns to social studies frameworks.
- Safe Smarter Teen Program
- Contact [Ron@rlbookpa.com](mailto:Ron@rlbookpa.com)
- [www.laurenskids.org](http://www.laurenskids.org)

# THINK FIRST STAY SAFE (CHILD LURES)

- Program covers PreK-12th grade. Our goal is to prevent all forms of child victimization by teaching families, professionals and other community members how to recognize, interrupt and report inappropriate behaviors and situations. CLP/TLP helps children and teens stay safe from sexual abuse, harassment, abduction, drugs and bullying/cyberbullying. This is accomplished through:
  - Emphasizing every child's right to live free of abuse. Promoting healthy social relationships.
  - Nurturing mutual kindness and respect. Setting personal and digital boundaries
  - Teaching age-appropriate Child Lures and practicing proven prevention strategies for each lure
  - Identifying trusted adults
  - Spanish version
  - \$489.00 for Pre K-6<sup>th</sup> grade Think First Child Safety
  - Offer a faith based program. [childluresprevention.com/faith-based/index.asp](http://childluresprevention.com/faith-based/index.asp)
  - For more information please contact Rosemary ([rosemary@childluresprevention.com](mailto:rosemary@childluresprevention.com)) or Jennifer ([Jennifer@childluresprevention.com](mailto:Jennifer@childluresprevention.com))

**OHIO**  
ONE OF THIRTEEN STATES HASN'T PASSED

We must educate  
kids!



*OHIO*  
**OHIO TEACHER CHARGED  
WITH SEXUALLY ABUSING 28  
FIRST-GRADE GIRLS**

A former teacher in southwest Ohio has been indicted 36 counts of gross sexual imposition.

Author: Associated Press  
Published: 9:04 AM EDT July 1, 2019



**LEBANON, Ohio (AP)** — A former physical education teacher accused of inappropriately

## TITO OLAN MARIN

South Carolina passed Erin's Law  
2014

2 victims: Nieces

First degree sexual assault/rape

March 2017 4<sup>th</sup> grader learned Erin's  
Law and disclosed abuse during  
presentation.

Investigation discovers he was raping  
two nieces both didn't know about  
each others abuse.

Sentenced in March 2018



## FILIBERTO FERNANDEZ

Lisle, Illinois

Arrested 2016 for sexual abuse and rape of  
child ages 3-7yrs old.

Victim: Girlfriend's daughter

Child disclosed at age 9 immediately after  
Erin's Law presentation to her teacher.



## JOHN VIGNA

Maryland passed Erin's law 2016

15 years as elementary teacher

Victims: Students

Parents and kids described him as  
"Everyone's Favorite"

Multiple students over 15 years

Arrested 2016 after 12 year old disclosed  
sexual abuse for 2 years with teacher.



# Two kids report sexual abuse after viewing educational videos in Va. school

by RYAN HUGHES/ABC7  
Thursday, October 27th 2016

AA



Two kids report sexual abuse after viewing educational videos in Va. school. (ABC7)



MANASSAS, Va. (ABC7) — Two children in Prince William County have come forward telling police they are victims of sexual assault.

# DA: After cop gives talk at Portland school, girl confides she's been raped

Updated Dec 31, 2018;  
Posted Dec 31, 2018



Jonathon Paul Rogers, 33, is accused of sex crimes against two girls -- starting years ago when they were ages 6 and 8.

### Anderson couple arrested after body safety talk at APA

By Laura Arwood | The Herald Bulletin Jan 18, 2019



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ANDERSON — An Anderson couple, including an Anderson Preparatory Academy employee, were arrested after a body safety presentation prompted a student to report abuse.

## Etowah County man charged with sexual abuse and child pornography; victim spoke up after seeing school presentation

POSTED 11:14 AM, MAY 26, 2015, BY WHNT NEWS 19

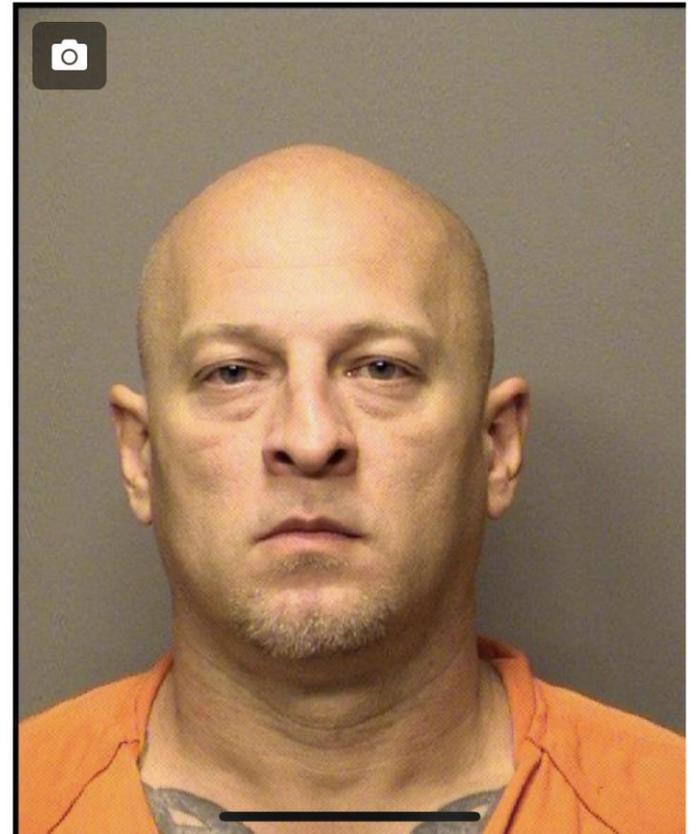


*This is an archived article and the information in the article may be outdated. Please look at the time stamp on the story to see when it was last updated.*

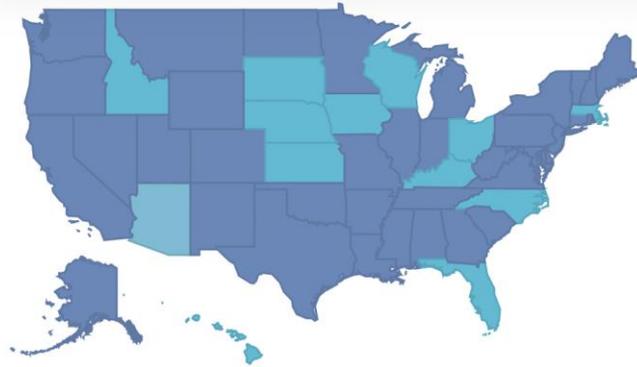


## Girl reports sex abuse after attending body safety program; Chesterton man arrested

Bob Kasarda bob.kasarda@nwi.com, 219-548-4345  
Oct 14, 2019 Updated 22 min ago



# GET IN TOUCH



## Our Progress

Erin's law has been passed in **37 states**. Contact your legislators to show your support in your state.

37

Passed

11

Introduced or being introduced in 2019/2020

- To learn more and find resources on Erin's law go to [www.erinslaw.org](http://www.erinslaw.org)
- Questions? Contact Erin at [erin@erinslaw.org](mailto:erin@erinslaw.org)