



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## ERIN MERRYIN'S LAW PASSES STATE SENATE

JEFFREY D. KLEIN March 7, 2016

| ISSUE: **CHILDREN, EDUCATION, CHILD ABUSE, SEX OFFENDERS**

*Bill would provide sexual abuse education for students from kindergarten through grade eight*

**Albany, NY - State Senators Jeff Klein (D-Bronx-Westchester) and David Valesky (D-Oneida),** announced that Erin Merryn's law passed the State Senate today, which would help protect children from sexual abuse by providing for age-appropriate awareness and education programs for students from kindergarten through grade eight.

First introduced by members of the Independent Democratic Conference in 2012, the Senate passed the bill this year on the heel of federal legislation that would provide funding to the State for its implementation. Despite the bill having passed the Senate every year since its introduction, it has yet to pass the Assembly.

"No child should ever have to suffer these kinds of horrible abuses in silence. With Erin Merryn's Law, we will ensure that our children are equipped with the information that they need to help another child, or to seek the help they need. I urge my colleagues in the legislature to join the IDC, Erin Merryn, and numerous advocates in fighting to give a voice to every child who may be suffering - we can make Erin Merryn's Law a reality in New York," **said Senator Klein.**

“State law in New York already requires that we educate our children on abduction - it is high time that we updated it to ensure that we are also educating our children on sexual abuse awareness and prevention. New York now has the opportunity to join the 26 other states that have prioritized protecting their children from sexual abuse. I am proud to join Senator Klein, the IDC, and Erin Merryn in calling for the implementation of this much-needed legislation,” **said Senator Valesky.**

As a child, Merryn was abused by both a neighbor and a family member. She stayed silent due to a combination of threats from her abusers, and the lack of knowledge about available help. Now, it is her mission to give a voice to every child who may be suffering.

In 2012, the IDC released a report on the need for Erin Merryn’s law, as well as the economic impact that sexual abuse has on the state. “Erin Merryn’s Law: Breaking the Silence” estimated that in New York, the immediate financial effects caused by child sexual abuse is estimated to cost the State over \$211 million, with ten times as much cost in long term impact.

Implementing an age-appropriate program for young students would give critically important information to victims – many of whom do not know there is a way out of their horrific situation.

“Erin Merryn’s Law recognizes that children themselves need to be not only aware of the dangers that exist in our society but provided with information and support to aid in avoiding abuse, exploitation and abduction. Too many times, we have seen the devastating results that lack of awareness and/or understanding of the dangers and warning signs of abuse, exploitation and abduction have had on our children and families. This legislation will help provide our communities with the tools to combat these terrible crimes,” **said Randi Bregman, Executive Director of Vera House, Inc.**

“The McMahon/Ryan Child Advocacy Center does a tremendous amount of community education and education in schools focusing on child abuse prevention programming. The impact of education on children is immense, because we want to make sure they know what to do and how to keep themselves safe. We know that in the schools where we provide education, we regularly have one or two children who come forward after learning through our program. The McMahon/Ryan Child Advocacy Center believes strongly in Erin Merryn's law, because we need to ensure that every single child is getting this education and the tools they need,” **said Linda Cleary, Executive Director of the McMahon/Ryan Child Advocacy Center.**

The bill is currently carried in the Assembly by Assemblyman Dinowitz.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2015-S1947B

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- - Passed Assembly

- Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Requires the commissioner of education to make recommendations to the board of regents relating to instruction on preventing child sexual exploitation and abuse in grades K - 8

January 15, 2015

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Jeffrey D. Klein

Do you support this bill?