

# Legislation Sponsored By Elik To Prevent Child Sexual Abuse And Grooming Heads To The Governor's Desk

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SPRINGFIELD - Legislation sponsored by State Representative Amy Elik (R-Fosterburg) aimed at preventing sexual abuse and grooming in schools recently passed the Illinois House of Representatives.

“Every child and teen deserves to be protected from predators, especially those who groom and abuse them in a school setting, which should always be safe for children,”

said Rep. Elik. “These are not harmless “relationships”, this is sexual abuse and this bill approved by the House aims to prevent this from happening.”

House Bill 1975 previously passed the House in April, and the Senate passed the bill with Amendment 2 last week. The bill then returned to the House for concurrence and final action. House Bill 1975 requires several initiatives aimed at addressing sexual abuse and assault in schools by school personnel. Provides that schools must develop an employee code of conduct spelling out professional boundaries for staff-student relationships to protect students from sexual misconduct and grooming by staff. Violations of the code of conduct as well as failures to report violations would result in disciplinary action. Expands the definition of grooming of a child to include in-person and written grooming, not just by electronic means as it is currently. Furthermore, requires that schools must develop a resource guide with sexual abuse response and prevention resources for families, and make it publicly available.

Rep. Elik added, “When I came to the General Assembly, I researched how we could create policy to prevent child sexual abuse from happening, and make no mistake, this is still a problem in schools. I am thankful that I was able to work with Democrat Representatives Michelle Mussman and Fred Crespo and especially Faith Coulson, who was also a victim and has been a tireless advocate for the prevention of sexual abuse in schools.”

HB 1975 will now head to the Governor’s desk for his signature upon becoming law.