

# Erin Merryn, Sexual Abuse Survivor And Founder Of Erin's Law, Shares Joyful News

When [Erin Merryn](#) was a child, she was sexually abused by two people she knew and trusted, including a family member. Erin endured the abuse from age 6 to 8 and from 11 to 13 and felt the long-lasting effects of her guilt, shame and loss of innocence. "It changed me from a strong, resilient, confident child to a very angry, hate-filled, self-destructive child, teenager and young adult," she says.

She even considered suicide. But Erin says her life changed when she saw an "[Oprah Show](#)" guest named [Truddi Chase](#) tell her own horrific story of sexual abuse. In 2010, Erin appeared on the "Oprah Show" herself and shared how the late [Truddi](#) had given her the confidence to confront one of her abusers.

"That family member, I ended up corresponding for seven months in letters with him until I got [an] apology," Erin said back then. "It was this letter that finally allowed me to come out of darkness and decide I wanted to be a face and voice on this silent epidemic."

Determined to make a difference, Erin ended up pushing the Illinois legislature to enact [Erin's Law](#), a law that demands sexual abuse education for children. "We teach kids tornado drills, fire drills, bus drills," Erin told Oprah. "We teach them nothing on sexual abuse."

Today, Erin's Law isn't just in the state of Illinois -- it's been passed in [seven other states](#) and, as Erin reveals in an update for "[Oprah: Where Are They Now?](#)", it's also being introduced in 19 more.

"The law could have saved me as a child and it's the reason why I'm so passionate about it," she says.

Erin's efforts have since earned her a spot as one of Glamour's [Women of the Year in 2012](#) and allowed her to meet President Obama in 2013, to whom she said, "My name is Erin. I've gotten a law passed that requires sexual abuse prevention in schools and my mission is all 50 states. This is not the last time you and I are going to meet."

Forgiving her abusers has also allowed Erin to trust men again on a personal level. In August 2013, she got married and, just six weeks later, received some exciting news. "I'm pregnant!" Erin shares. "I'm super-excited."

As she prepares for motherhood, Erin thinks about the type of relationship she wants with her own children. "I want my children to know that they can come to me with anything. I

don't want them to feel that they have to keep secrets the way I kept secrets as a child," she says.

Erin's ultimate goal for Erin's Law is to see it become a national law -- no matter how long it takes. "I will be 95 years old and still pushing for this law," she says. "I'm not stopping!"