

**Written Testimony to the Ohio House of Representatives Education and Career  
Readiness Committee**

From Daniel C. Rosecrans

Wellington Exempted Village School District Board of Education

Re: Substitute House Bill 318: School Resource Officer (SRO)

Sponsor: Representatives Patterson, LaTourette

Co-Sponsors: Representatives Boggs, Lepore-Hagan, Carfagna, Slaby, Rogers, Scherer,  
Smith, Miller, Sheehy

Dear Chairman Brenner and members of the House Education and Career Readiness  
Committee:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to the Committee with regard to Substitute HB 318 and School Resource Officer qualifications and training. I believe I have a somewhat unique perspective relating to this topic. I am a retired Ohio Police Officer, an Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy and Ohio School Resource Officer Association trained SRO. I was licensed by the State of Ohio as an Adult Education Instructor and as a Basic Police Academy Instructor. Currently, I am a serving Board of Education Member for the Wellington Exempted Village School District.

I have reviewed HB 318 and Substitute HB 318 and I am a supporter of legislation that requires training for School Resource Officers. I wish to present a brief history of the School Resource Officer program in my district as well as comment about the issues of qualifications and training to urge you to consider revising the proposed language in Substitute HB 318 for section 3313.951 to require **ALL** individuals employed as an SRO, or similar position, to be trained and certified.

My District consists of three different school buildings. Kindergarten through third grade in one, fourth grade through eighth in another, and ninth through twelfth in the third building. We have a student population of approximately 1100 children. In 2013, discussion began between the District's Superintendent, the Village of Wellington, and the Wellington Police Department to determine if an SRO program was practical and financially feasible. After a lengthy period of negotiation, it was agreed that the District would create a single SRO position, shared between three buildings, and that the SRO position would be a school employee. The position initially had six officers alternating shifts each weekday. This is an atypical solution. The SRO program operated with no

Memorandum of Understanding between the Village, the Police Department, or the District. As there was no MOU, there was no formal job description or training requirement other than being a police officer and being present in our schools. Since the program's inception to today, none of our current officers have been trained as an SRO despite our Board of Education offering to pay for the training. In fact, our officers are referred to as School Security Officers (SSO) due to their lack of training. The course of study to become a certified SRO is approximately 40 hours long. During this course of instruction, SRO trainees are exposed to topics of school law, coping and talking with difficult children, including those with difficult mental health issues, differentiating between school matters and law enforcement matters, acquiring classroom instruction skills, recognizing security issues specific to schools and responding to emergencies. These training topics assist officers in being prepared to not only serve our children but also to assist districts in creating and operating a quality SRO program with suitable officers. Unfortunately, this training comes with associated costs. In my district this is, I believe, the primary reason for officers not seeking or being provided the training. It saddens me deeply because our children deserve better.

As written, Substitute HB 318, would, if enacted, exempt from training requirements, School Resource Officers who are employed in that role prior to the bills signing. I would offer that this action, while well intended, is misguided. Training, for a police officer, is vital for every facet of their profession. Officers are required to qualify with their weapon annually. They train to perform CPR and first aid. They are required to receive continuing professional education and they train for rapid deployment to school involved shootings. Why would it not be the case for the role of SRO? These officers are dealing with our most precious commodity, our children.

I would offer for your consideration, that officers currently performing SRO duties could be granted a period, maybe one year, to obtain their training while being permitted to work as an SRO. This may be an unpopular position, but we must ask ourselves what we really hope to accomplish here. I sincerely hope that our intention is to have the best trained officers we can have for our children and our schools.

As we all are painfully aware from the recent tragedy that occurred at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas School in Parkland, Florida, School Resource Officers are expected to be more than a uniform in our schools. They are expected to do more than collect a pay check at a perceived "soft" or "cushy" school job for extra spending money or while waiting for retirement. They are expected to be role models, educators, counselors, and

friends and confidants. Most importantly, SROs are expected to be protectors. In order to do this, they must **ALL** be trained.

In closing, it is my opinion that failing to require our School Resource Officers to be properly trained is a tremendous disservice to our schools, our community, the officer, and most importantly, our children.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

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