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Representative Glenn W. Holmes
63rd House District

Sponsor Testimony- HB 123
Primary and Secondary Education Committee
March 19, 2019

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Jones, Ranking Member Robinson, and esteemed members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for granting me the opportunity to speak on a landmark piece of legislation, the SAVE Students Act. While this bill does many things to better enable us to keep our children safe, I'll focus on a few key provisions that I feel should be highlighted.

This bill focuses on methods and practices that are evidence based. This includes methods that demonstrate a rationale based on high quality research findings, or have a statistically significant effect on relevant outcomes. It's important to note that HB 123 provides no-cost options to relieve any undue burden on school districts.

The SAVE Students Act would have the Ohio Department of Education develop a model threat assessment policy (similar to schools' emergency management policies already in place), as well as a threat assessment team in each school. This would provide administrators, teachers, and students with the knowledge they need to identify types of threatening behavior and how to deal with it. The bill would also provide training to students and teachers on both suicide and violence awareness and prevention. This gives both administrators and students the knowledge and tools to possibly prevent a tragedy before it happens.

This bill also outlines programming geared toward increasing social inclusion between students in school. This includes but isn't limited to social inclusion training as well as student lead violence prevention clubs. Often times those who are isolated at school are the victims of bullying which can cause them to become even more isolated. The goal is to teach our youth how to minimize social isolation, marginalization and rejection but creating an inclusive community that reaches out and connects with at-risk individuals *before* they choose to hurt themselves or others. We want our schools to be a community where all are included and feel supported, especially by their peers.

In closing, HB 123, or the SAVE Students Act, would make sure all middle and high school students in Ohio learn how to spot the signs and signals of violence and how to speak up to get help for themselves and their peers. This bill is about transforming school culture from one where students are afraid, to one where they feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. We have the potential to be a national leader on school safety and can provide a roadmap for creating positive school climate change. Both Rep. Manning and I believe this is a great first step. We

appreciate you granting us the opportunity to speak in favor of HB 123, and would welcome any questions you may have.