



**Proponent Testimony in Support of HB 123  
Primary and Secondary Education Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives | April 2, 2019  
Howie Beigelman, Executive Director, Ohio Jewish Communities**

As the statewide government advocacy, public affairs, and community relations voice of Ohio's eight Jewish federations, Ohio Jewish Communities submits this testimony today in support of HB 123, SAVE Students Act.

Background and Statement of Interest

Jewish preschools and K-12 day schools have long been subject to the types of threats and violence that are now becoming more common in public schools (see attached addendum). To counter these threats, and protect every student and staff member in every preschool and school, anywhere – and anytime – must be a priority of government.

A Stark Need

Some of the recommendations by public safety experts, including those in the final report of the Federal Commission on School Safety<sup>1</sup>, such as target hardening, access control, communications, and of course, trained security personnel, require committed funding. What this legislation addresses are the consensus areas that do not need significant funding. They will however help make our schools – and those in them – safer.

It has become a truism, after an attack, that there were signs along the way, but they were missed. People didn't connect the dots, they didn't realize the significance, or they didn't know who to turn to, or how to respond.

This legislation moves to rectify that.

- It creates an anonymous “tip line” for threat reporting.
- It also creates, and provides curriculum and standards for those staffing STAT (school threat assessment) teams. These are multidisciplinary teams which will be required to complete periodic, evidence-based and peer-reviewed, threat assessment training programs.
- The legislation also creates access for schools to new training options regarding both suicide awareness and violence prevention.
- Finally, the legislation requires these new threat assessment plans be incorporated into the schools existing annual emergency management plan.

These are no-cost or low-cost efforts that will help staff to have the needed tools to confront dangerous situations before they spiral into violence.

Jewish Community and Nonpublic Schools Interest and Need

Speaking for the Jewish community – and the Jewish schools across Ohio – our only requested amendment to this legislation is to clarify that chartered nonpublic schools, such as ours, are given the full opportunity to choose to opt in and receive these same services from the state in preparing their schools to be even safer.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/school-safety/school-safety-report.pdf>

This was the approach the Legislature took in the last General Assembly with HB 318, regarding training for school safety and school resource officers. Nonpublic schools were afforded the opportunity to participate<sup>2</sup>.

Every student, every teacher, every staff member, and every visitor – to any school, at any time – should be as safe as possible. This legislation is one more step toward that goal.

Thank you again for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 123.

We are available for questions or follow up at any time.

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Howie Beigelman, Executive Director

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.clevelandjewishnews.com/news/local\\_news/jewish-schools-receive-state-funding-for-safety-security/article\\_0de73966-c728-11e8-9680-03c5d5b8c188.html](https://www.clevelandjewishnews.com/news/local_news/jewish-schools-receive-state-funding-for-safety-security/article_0de73966-c728-11e8-9680-03c5d5b8c188.html)

## APPENDIX A:

### Timeline of Threats and Attacks to Schools and Centers

Schools, like churches, museums, or universities are no longer “sacred spaces” that are “off limits.” FBI statistics show<sup>3</sup> that active shooter incidents have been on the rise since 2000. With renewed attacks at schools and in houses of worship, it’s sadly a given that Jewish communities are ever and always on the top of threat lists, making the need for better security critical at Jewish schools, synagogues, and communal institutions.

Since the 1970’s, Jews worldwide have faced attacks and threats to Jewish schools and child care centers:

**May 1974, Maa’lot, Israel:** Three Arab terrorists dressed as Israeli soldiers attack a school. 21 children plus several adult victims are killed, and others injured<sup>4</sup>.

**April 1999, Los Angeles, CA:** A White Supremacist sprays gunfire in the North Valley Jewish Community Center with some 250 children on campus, injuring five, including a five year old boy who lost half his blood, two six year old boys, a teenager and an adult<sup>5</sup>. He later kills a US Postal Service worker.

**July 2006, Seattle, WA:** Using a 13 year old girl as hostage, a Muslim terrorist forces his way into the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, killing one and injuring five, including a pregnant mother<sup>6</sup>.

**March 2008, Jerusalem, Israel:** A terrorist kills eight and wounds eleven, some as young as 15, in an attack on a Jerusalem school, Mercaz ha’Rav<sup>7</sup>. Several victims are dual nationals with US, Canadian, French, or Ethiopian citizenship.

**March 2012, Toulouse, France:** A teacher, two of his children, and a third child, between the ages of three and ten are killed by a Muslim terrorist at the entrance to a Jewish school<sup>8</sup>. A teenager is seriously wounded as well.

**April 2014, Kansas City, KS:** A day before Passover, a White Supremacist kills three, including a 14 year old and his grandfather during a shooting spree at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City and the Village Shalom retirement community<sup>9</sup>.

**January 2015, Antwerp & Brussels, Belgium:** Following counter-terrorism raids and arrests, Jewish schools in the two cities cancel classes after being told they are potential targets of an ISIS attack<sup>10</sup>.

**January 2016, Copenhagen, Denmark:** A 15 year old girl is arrested for plotting an attack on a Jewish school<sup>11</sup>.

**March 2017, The United Kingdom:** Home Secretary Amber Rudd warns that intercepted ISIS communications indicate Jewish schools are a major target<sup>12</sup>.

**January 2018, Paris, France:** A Jewish teenager wearing her school uniform is attacked, and her face slashed with a knife<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2014/september/fbi-releases-study-on-active-shooter-incidents/pdfs/a-study-of-active-shooter-incidents-in-the-u.s.-between-2000-and-2013>

<sup>4</sup> <http://safehavensinternational.org/may-1974-maalot-massacre/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/08/12/us/shootings-los-angeles-overview-man-with-past-racial-hate-surrenders-day-camp.html>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/14082298/ns/us\\_news-crime\\_and\\_courts/t/police-seattle-shooting-suspect-ambushed-teen/#.Wo8Dua6nGUk](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/14082298/ns/us_news-crime_and_courts/t/police-seattle-shooting-suspect-ambushed-teen/#.Wo8Dua6nGUk)

<sup>7</sup> <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Palestinian/Pages/Terror-shooting-at-Mercaz-Harav-Yeshiva-in-Jerusalem-6-Mar-2008.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-17426313>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2015/08/31/us/kansas-jewish-center-gunman-guilty/index.html>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/16/belgium-terror-raid-jewish-schools-closed>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/denmark-teen-girl-convicted-of-bomb-attack-plot-on-schools/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/3007800/home-secretary-amber-rudd-warns-isis-ihadists-are-plotting-attacks-on-british-jews-as-they-are-a-legitimate-target/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/girls-face-cut-near-paris-in-suspected-anti-semitic-assault/>