

Senators,

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today. I am Jesse Steiner and I am the Superintendent for Northwestern Local Schools in Clark County.

I became aware of Senator Kunze's bill through the media and contacted her office to see if there was anything I could do to help get the bill passed. I do not think the bill goes far enough for reasons I will give later, but S.B. 253 is a good place to start the conversation.

As many of you know, there are laws in place which limit how long a school can remove a student from school. Currently, a student can be expelled for up to 80 days with several exceptions to this law. If a student attempts to harm other students at school with a deadly weapon, they may be permanently excluded from school but only if legal channels are followed and permanent exclusion is awarded. A student can also be suspended for one year if they bring a deadly weapon to school. However, those laws do not apply to students who threaten to harm other students at school but have not done so yet.

To help add further clarity to the type of threatening situations this bill is attempting to address, I would like to give the committee some information on how threats that end in violence occur and what can be done after the threat is made.

According to the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit, there are multiple steps that are consistent with those who have committed mass casualty crimes. The first step is a grievance. This is a wrong that the person of concern feels has been committed against them and they cannot get past that grievance. The second step is ideation. Ideation is the idea that violence is the only answer to solving the grievance, they believe they have no other option. The third step is research and planning. This is the stage when the person of concern starts reading about other attacks, researches different types of weapons that could be used, and what materials they might need. The fourth stage is preparation. In this stage, the person of concern starts stockpiling guns and ammunition as well as practicing for the attack. The last step before the attack is called the breach. This is where the person of concern practices entering the building or place for the attack to see what

obstacles they may encounter. After the breach, the only thing left is the attack.

In the state of Ohio, a student can perform all of those steps except for the attack and there is very little that can be done to that student of concern or to protect the students that have been targeted.

Without the attack, the situation is called a threat. Without the attack, a school could only expel the person of concern for 80 days and then the person of concern could come back to school. The person of concern, who intended to kill other students, would be back in school with those same students and there is nothing the school can do about it. A threat as described above also carries little legal consequences. The most a juvenile could be charged with is disorderly conduct and possibly inducing panic for making such threats. The maximum sentence for a student convicted of those crimes is 90 days. So a student who has shown every sign of imminent violence as determined by a threat assessment can be right back in the school where they intended to kill their classmates. The courts can provide some mental health services while the student is incarcerated. However, after the student has been released from jail, it is the

responsibility of the parents to make sure mental health services are supplied and some insurances do not cover it.

As a superintendent of a local school, one of my responsibilities is to ensure the safety of my students and staff at all times. In a scenario as described above. I cannot ensure the safety of my students and staff. I take pride in having a very secure campus and in the diligence with which we conduct our safety training. However, the lack of ability to keep a known threat away from our campus would make security impossible. Civil protection orders are good as long as both parties follow the guidelines of the protection order. Schools need more tools to keep their students safe.

SB 253 is a good start. It gets the conversation started on protecting our students but there is much more that needs to be done. I cannot imagine what it would be like to know that my student's name was on a hit list and that the person who wanted to kill her was free to roam the same hallways as my student. All students are entitled to a free and appropriate education. Safety and security are a huge part of what makes an education appropriate.

Thank you for your time.