

**Proponent Testimony**  
**House Bill 498**  
**House Education Committee**

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, and distinguished members of the House Education Committee. My name is Robert Fisher and I am the Chief of Police for the City of Hilliard. I am honored to have the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of H.B. 498, Student expulsion-threatening violence on school grounds.

On October 6, 2015 the City of Hilliard and the entire central Ohio community averted a tragedy. We learned, on this date, of a plot that had been crafted by a 15 year old student to carry out a shooting at Hilliard Darby High School, where almost 1,700 students and staff live every day. The student had taken affirmative steps to purchase a handgun from another student and told him to wear red so that he would not be shot. Fortunately another student heard of this plan and reported it to school administrators who quickly involved the police.

An investigation occurred and the student was criminally charged. As is normally the case, the student was released to the custody of his family and ordered to stay at home. A few days later this student again made threatening statements directed toward a pep rally that was to occur. Given that he lives only 5 minutes from the school, there was obviously a tremendous amount of concern throughout the school and the community. Police again had to intercede and the courts issued a warrant to take him back into custody.

Fortunately, through the actions of a student who understands the importance of “see something, say something,” no violence occurred. There was, however, a tremendous amount of community panic that ensued and a large number of hours spent dealing with this situation. We later learned that this student has had a history of mental health issues and a troubled past involving threats and violence.

Incidents like this occur way too frequently in Ohio today. Almost daily we watch the news to hear of a threat or act of violence occurring across our state. Now is the time to give our schools and first responders another tool to help combat this growing epidemic. We need more options to ensure the safety of our communities and provide a process that will get the necessary help to those that need it.

H.B. 498 provides that added option, or “tool in the tool box,” for school administrators to work with law enforcement so that appropriate protections are provided to our students and staff and that those students who need mental health services can receive those services while having an opportunity to continue their education and become productive members of society.

As a community member, parent, and Police Chief, I am very concerned about the prevalence of school violence today. It is my hope that we can work together to continue to find ways to combat this problem. I believe H.B. 498 takes that step and I encourage you to support this initiative. I appreciate the efforts of Senator Hughes, Representative Kunze, Superintendent Marschhausen, and the others from our education and mental health communities who have worked to make our schools and communities safer.

Chairman Brenner and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.