

Chief James T. McBride

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Written Proponent Testimony House Bill 544

Education and Career Readiness Committee 6.19.2018

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity submit written testimony as a proponent for House Bill 544.

My name is **Chief James T. McBride** and I have been involved in educational facility protection for more than 40 years as a police official, educator, trainer and private security industry consultant. I have served as a member of a special Youngstown Police Department-Youngstown Board of Education Safety Task Force; as a prevention specialist on Ohio's Governor's Campus Safety and Security Task Force; as national chairman of IACLEA's Two Year Institutional Safety Task Force; as the Mayor's delegate to Youngstown State University Safety and Security Task Force; as a traveling consultant and assessor for the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators; as a traveling consultant specializing in learning and training environment safety for Burns International Security Services Inc.; and as a two-year college police chief and public safety director in Ohio. I co-authored and researched a text book entitled *K-9 School and Campus Shootings Awareness* published by Kendall Hunt Inc. and currently teach criminal justice classes at Lakeland Community College.

I am a graduate of Youngstown State University (criminal justice and public administration degrees) and earned a public administration in criminal justice master's degree from Cleveland State University. I attended the National Crime Prevention Institute's facility protection course at the University of Louisville and the Department of Defense's Facilities Protection Course in Chicago. I am a graduate of the National Defense University's national security management program as well as the U.S. Army Military Police School (Ft. Gordon GA), U.S. Army Criminal Investigation School (Ft Gordon GA), and U.S Justice Department's COBRA Threat School (Ft. McClellan AL). I am a certified Terrorist/Intelligence Liaison Officer, Crisis Intervention Officer, Peace Officer and Peace Officer Instructor.

I would like to testify as an expert in educational site protection regarding H.B. 544 which would require the State Board of Education to adopt rules prescribing safety standards for use in the construction of new facilities for public schools and chartered and non-chartered nonpublic schools and require the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission to amend its construction and design standards for new classroom facilities included in state-assisted projects to comply with the State Board's standards. As my co-author, Gregory Truhan, and I mentioned in the above cited text book, the protective needs of each and every learning site vary in significant ways. Once an *assessment* is done to determine the security and safety needs of a particular site then responsible authorities can use the assessment results to develop a *protective plan* that include multiple components designed to establish and maintain *reasonable* levels of protection at that location or area. A reasonable level of protection is one that balances identified site protection needs with the site's location, culture and purposes within the limits of the site's budget. Of

course, continuing evaluation is required to address changes that occur within the learning environment over time.

The “beauty” of HB 544 is that it recognizes that many schools are “soft targets” and as such are very attractive to those bent on mayhem or revenge. It also acknowledges the need to enhance school and campus safety on a cost-effective and timely basis while endorsing the principle that educational site protection can only be effective if it includes *multiple components*. Under the provisions of this bill, school officials, architects and contractors would be given a menu of security and safety options from which they *must* select at least two when building new learning facilities in Ohio to enhance the overall safety and well-being of students and staff. Each one of these protective elements has been proven to be effective for its particular critical purpose and role in an integrated program of site physical security and include surveillance video, entryway metal detectors, direct entrance and exit routes located within a classroom and accessible only from inside that classroom, communication between classrooms and the administrative offices, a real-time notification device located within a classroom, and strategically positioned and operated containment barriers for catastrophic threat containment. HB 544 also encourages but does not require educational officials to select more than just two options from this menu of enhanced safety options. The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission would then amend its construction and design standards used to approve new classroom facilities included in state-assisted projects to comply with this legislation.

Adoption of this legislation by the House and subsequently by the Ohio General Assembly would serve to make Ohio’s students and those who teach them and support them at new learning sites much safer and more difficult to attack than currently may be the case. Moreover, by taking this unique step Ohio officials would also be promoting and fostering an important safety industry concept known as CPTED, the acronym for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. A CPTED approach to learning environment design can prove extremely valuable against currently known threats as well as against unanticipated types of danger.

As a professional interested in the safety and welfare of learning environments, I’d like to compliment all of the Ohio House Members who have sponsored and supported this important legislation. I would hope that your colleagues come to understand the importance of this proposed bill in relationship to the quality of new learning environments throughout Ohio. Well-protected schools give teachers the opportunity to safely do what they do best and enable students to learn without fear. Hopefully in the future Ohio’s policy makers will decide to apply these same measures to state college and university campuses as well as to the remodeling/upgrades of K-12 learning sites.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

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