



**State Representatives  
John Patterson & Sarah LaTourette**

Amended Substitute House Bill 318  
Sponsor Testimony  
Senate Finance Committee  
May 15, 2018

Chairman Oelslager, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Skindell, and distinguished members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on Amended Substitute House Bill 318, legislation that would establish a school safety grant program for FY 2019, as well as determine basic qualifications and training requirements of school resource officers. While current law does allow school districts throughout Ohio to hire school resource officers (SROs), Ohio law lacks basic requirements for how SROs are trained and does not clearly identify even basic responsibilities.

As this esteemed body is already aware, in 2012 the City of Chardon was struck by tragedy. A student opened fire at Chardon High School just as school was starting, leaving three students dead and two others injured. What some of you may not know is that Chardon's football coach, Frank Hall, heroically chased the shooter out of the school, preventing further casualties. Coach Hall saved innocent lives that day and is regarded in the Chardon area today as a legendary hero. Not long after the shooting, the Coach Hall Foundation was established with this mission: "to provide effective means to protect against school violence and improve the quality of life in our school communities."

Representative Patterson and I both represent the Chardon School District, and last year the Coach Hall Foundation approached us with the concept for the As Introduced Version of House Bill 318. They believe, and we agree, that in order for SROs to effectively protect students, the state must establish at least a base level standard for school districts to follow when they choose to hire SROs. Representative Patterson and I led a very thorough interested parties process while

working on this legislation and, based on the input and feedback from stakeholders, have made several changes to this legislation throughout that process.

Should HB 318 become law, SROs must complete a training program approved by the Ohio Peace Officer's Training Commission as well as an additional 40 hours of training that includes instruction regarding skills, tactics, and strategies including:

- School campus design, school building security needs and characteristics;
- The nuances of law enforcement functions conducted inside a school environment, including understanding the psychological and physiological characteristics consistent with the ages of the students in the assigned building or buildings, de-escalation techniques, and behavior management strategies;
- The mechanics of being a positive role model for youth, including appropriate communication techniques which enhance interactions between the school resource officer and students;
- Classroom management techniques to provide law-related education to students and methods for managing the behaviors sometimes associated with educating children with special needs;
- The laws regarding compulsory attendance, as set forth in Chapter 3321 of the Revised Code; and
- Identifying the trends in drug use, eliminating the instance of drug use, and encouraging a drug-free environment in schools.

Also contained within this legislation is the requirement that a school district that wishes to obtain school resource officer services must enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the law enforcement agency supplying the services. This MOU would clarify the purpose of the school resource officer program and roles and expectations among the participating entities.

Last month, Amended Substitute House Bill 318 received strong bipartisan support from the House after adding a \$10 million grant program to be administered by the Attorney General's office. This grant would be used for school safety and training programs that might include:

- School resource officer certification training;

- Any type of active shooter and school safety training;
- All grade level type educational resources;
- Training to identify and assist students with mental health issues; and
- Any other training related to school safety.

Additionally, the bill require the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission to conduct a study of school resource officer services and security upgrades in existing school district-operated buildings to be submitted to the Governor and members of the General Assembly by February 1, 2019. This study will include all of the following:

- The types of security updates school districts have retrofitted into or onto school buildings;
- Options for possible security upgrades for school buildings;
- An analysis of the most cost-effective ways to add physical security changes to existing school buildings; and
- The number of school buildings with a school resource officer that serves only that building, the number of buildings with no resource officer, the number of buildings that share the services of a resource officer, and the estimated cost statewide for each school building in the state to have a resources officer that serves only that building.

We all agree that safety is of the utmost importance for all of our citizens, but it is especially important that we take every possible step that we can to ensure the safety of our schools. We believe HB 318 is an important common sense step toward that goal. We also believe there is more than can, and should be done.

Thank you for allowing us to offer sponsor testimony on Amended Substitute House Bill 318 today. We would be happy to answer any questions or address any concerns the committee may have.