



**Proponent Testimony of Howie Beigelman in Support of HB 318  
Finance Committee | Ohio Senate  
Columbus, OH | June 5, 2018**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Skindell, and Members of the Committee:

Ohio Jewish Communities is the government advocacy, public affairs, and community relations voice of the eight Jewish federations and their some 150 agencies and partners statewide. On their behalf, we submit this testimony in support of HB 318, and urge a favorable report by the committee and passage by the full Senate. We are grateful to the sponsors, Representatives LaTourette & Patterson and the leadership of both chambers for their efforts in getting the bill so far along. We're especially grateful to Senator Gardner for all of his time and efforts dealing with so many interested parties.

HB 318 does two, discrete things that are vital for school safety: it standardizes training for School Resource Officers (SROs) and it authorizes a study of security needs and best practices for school buildings throughout Ohio.

**School Resource Officers are now a necessity**

Current events have tragically proven school safety to be a public policy issue of paramount importance. This year alone, as of May 25, 2018, there have been twenty-three incidents of gun violence in American schools, averaging more than one per week.<sup>1</sup>

Threats of violence in schools are becoming more commonplace, and have prompted school closures and arrests, as well as increased security, here in Ohio<sup>2</sup>.

**Anti-Semitic incidents are on the rise in Ohio**

For the Jewish community, school safety has long been a focus. Attacks on Jewish schools and community centers have been documented worldwide since at least the 1970, and threats and violence against Jewish schools and pre-schools here in the United States are a sad fact of life (see addendum attached to this testimony for further information). And, anti-Semitic incidents are on the rise here in Ohio. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has recorded a rise in white supremacist activity on college campuses, ranking Ohio sixth in the nation<sup>3</sup>. Last year, as part of a wave of close to 150 bomb threats against Jewish Community Centers (JCCs), four were made against JCCs here in Ohio, prompting lockdowns and evacuations<sup>4</sup>. Each of the JCCs in Ohio receiving bomb threats has a pre-school on their campus.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/02/us/school-shootings-2018-list-trnd/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> See e.g., <http://abc6onyourside.com/news/local/several-central-ohio-schools-cancel-classes-others-add-security-due-to-threats>, <https://www.mydaytondailynews.com/news/crime--law/students-arrested-threats-rock-southwest-ohio-schools/5rMcdhePz1c1YODS4L1GiM/>, <http://qfm96.com/news/061160-teen-arrested-for-making-school-threats-in-southern-ohio/>, <http://radio.wosu.org/post/newark-police-arrest-eighth-grader-school-threats>, <https://www.whio.com/news/crime--law/oakwood-investigating-threat-high-school/KcH3eArKcTkrZH6gantFXN/>, <http://fox8.com/2018/05/21/police-investigation-of-two-students-leads-to-extra-security-at-mentor-high-school/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2018/02/ohio\\_colleges\\_rank\\_6th\\_for\\_inc.html](https://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2018/02/ohio_colleges_rank_6th_for_inc.html)

<sup>4</sup> <https://projects.propublica.org/graphics/jcc-bomb-threats>



The recent ADL study documents a surge in anti-Semitic incidents in the Ohio, spiking 160 percent from 2015-2017<sup>5</sup> and the same study notes anti-Semitic incidents in schools rose 94 percent in that time.

### **HB 318 standardizes safety procedures in Ohio public and chartered non-public schools**

Today, there are no standardized procedures regarding training or placing school resource officers in schools.<sup>6</sup> Schools are not required to have a resource officer on campus, nor are there policies and procedures in place to ensure a school resource officer has the requisite training necessary to fulfill their duties.

This bill changes that. It would set up a system where school districts and chartered non-public schools wishing to utilize SROs formulate a memorandum of understanding regarding the purpose and goals with the law enforcement agency providing the officer.

Appropriately, this legislation includes both public and chartered non-public schools in these programs.

### **HB 318 creates standardized training for school resource officers**

Even in schools that already have an SRO present, those officers are not required to have any additional training. No framework for such training exists at this time. HB 318 changes that as well, ensuring forty hours of school safety specific training and providing a common framework for school security across all schools, statewide.

### **HB 318's study provision**

An important element of HB 318 is that it includes a provision providing for a study of best security practices, equipment, infrastructure, and technology as well as the best-case utilization of SROs. This study likewise includes chartered non-public schools as well as public schools.

We are grateful for this. Our communities look forward to partnering with state public safety officials, education leaders, and public-school districts statewide to learn from these studies.

### **HB 318 funds its requirements**

HB 318 also offers modest funding for the programs and procedures it creates, allocating \$10 million to the Attorney General for grants relating to the specific safety issues currently arising, such as certification training for school resource officers, active shooter scenarios, and helping identify and assist students dealing with mental health issues. This will help create positive change in how school safety is handled across Ohio, in both our public and chartered non-public schools.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.adl.org/media/10942/download>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.news5cleveland.com/longform/whos-protecting-our-kids-ohio-schools-lack-security-regulations>



**Conclusion & Next Steps**

We support this legislation, even as we recognize it is but one step in ensuring the safety of students and staff in Ohio's schools. We look forward to working with the General Assembly to address additional opportunities for school safety and community security in the near future.

We urge you to favorably report HB 318 as soon as possible.

Thank you.

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**Addendum:**

**Background & Timeline of Selected Attacks on Jewish Schools & Child Care Centers**

Schools, like churches, museums, or universities are no longer “sacred spaces” that are “off limits.” FBI statistics show 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, including:

**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.

**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. 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.

**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. 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. 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.

**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.

**January 2016, Copenhagen, Denmark:** A 15-year-old girl is arrested for plotting an attack on a Jewish school.

**January – March, 2017, The US & Canada:** Some 150 bomb threats are received at Jewish Community Centers across North America, including several across Ohio.

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

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



Ohio Jewish Communities

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