



OHIO SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION • 6277 Riverside Drive, #2N • Dublin, Ohio 43017 •

May 14, 2021

Dear Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is John Hartman and I am a School Resource Officer (SRO) in Delaware serving as the Vice President of the Ohio School Resource Officers Association (OSROA). I am submitting this testimony today in support of the budget amendment proposed by the Ohio Association of School Nurses (OASN) that would restore the ODE license and corresponding education requirements for school nurses eliminated in HB 442 (133rd GA). I believe my parallel perspective as a SRO can provide helpful insight about the necessity of specialized, school-specific training for professionals like nurses and police officers applying their knowledge to a school setting.

I have been a police officer for 21 years, seven of those as an SRO. A police officer's duties are complex, requiring numerous skills, certifications, abilities, and aptitudes. With these skills, an officer can serve his community with competence and effectiveness for his entire career. However, when beginning to work in a school setting, those skills should be adapted and expanded on to appropriately adjust to the unique characteristics of a school setting.

The stark difference in duties and skills between a regular law enforcement officer and an SRO is one of the reasons why the Legislature enacted HB 318 (13rd GA) to require law enforcement officers/peace officers to have a minimum of specific school-setting related requirements to act as a School Resource Officer. HB 318 required completion of a 40-hour SRO Basic Training course for all law enforcement officers entering the school as an SRO. The passage of HB 318 in 2018 suggests that the Legislature has already recognized that school-specific training is necessary for professionals looking to apply their existing skill set to a school setting in order for duties to be carried out appropriately.

I can speak firsthand about the transition from police officer to SRO. It is a night and day difference. Many officers have quickly realized that school-based policing is not what they thought it was, don't like it, and end up returning to a patrol capacity. Only by getting job-specific training and additional education is a SRO truly set up for success – both their own and those they serve.

The example of an SRO in the schools is a perfect comparison to that of a school nurse. I have known many registered nurses over the years in a professional capacity and hold them in the highest regard. They are competent, skilled and desire to help. They are proficient in the hospital setting and in navigating all of the nuances that that environment holds. However, registered nurses – like police officers – who find themselves in a school environment are not qualified to serve in that role without specialized education. They have the core qualities, but they are now in a completely different environment. They now have FERPA to deal with in addition to HIPPA, daily scheduled medication plans, emergency medical needs, allergies, IEPs, 504s, emergency operation plans, inclusion in Crisis Response Teams, first aid/aed emergency response training for staff, not to mention the unplanned ill children and other staff/student emergencies. The basic foundations of all nursing practice – like policing – may be the same, but when you add a school environment, the duties and competencies required are drastically different.

The SRO, when trained and implementing his knowledge correctly, is a vital asset to any school setting. The same can be said of the school nurse. As such, it is paramount that both undergo the proper education, training, certification and supports to be successful. Without this education, schools may see increased liability and the occurrence of issues arising from negligence. Only with this critical specialized training will the health, safety and well-being of students and staff be ensured.

Thus, on behalf of OSROA, I respectfully ask the Senate to include OASN's proposed amendment in the state budget bill. Removing school nurses from the HB 442 changes is necessary to avoid additional unintended consequences resulting from the bill and to restore the strong professional licensure standards so essential to school nursing. Thank you for your consideration.

Officer John Hartman #48

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