

Proponent Testimony
Senate Bill 112
The Ohio Childhood Safety Act

Chairmen Johnson, Vice Chair Manchester, and Ranking Member McNally, thank you for the Opportunity to Testify today on SB 112 The Ohio Childhood Safety Act. My name is Timothy J. Cassell and I wanted to provide written proponent testimony. Some of you know me for my work on behalf of Community Schools or from my time serving in the House. However you may not know I was a carpenter prior to my election to State Representative and one of my many skillsets was door hardware installation. I have installed thousands of doors and hardware in my 15 years in the trade. I'm here today because I believe this bill is very important and deserves your attention and passage.

I want to thank Senator Rulli for bringing this legislation forward and to give you an Idea of how important this legislation is. I am going to take you back in time lets step back 116 years to March 4, 1908 location Collinwood Ohio to one of the most tragic stories in Ohio's History. On that solemn day 172 elementary children, two teachers and one rescuer lost their lives in the Lakewood Elementary School fire. Now many are under the impression that it was because of doors that didn't open outward but actually that was not the issue the doors did in fact open out however they did not open as they should have because one was not unlocked and the others had faulty hardware that was difficult to operate and once pressure was put against the door the hardware completely failed to operate. In the aftermath the children were found piled against the nonfunctioning doors. This tragedy did bring about some much needed changes in building codes for not only schools but all commercial buildings.

Now lets get to the heart of SB 112 the main function is an annual inspection of doors and hardware for proper functionality. Even with the changes to code and modern building codes

hardware does require some minimal maintenance and inspection to guarantee proper function. Its been my experience that in most cases small adjustments like tightening hinge screws and hardware fasteners will solve most issues. In some cases the hinges may need shimmed to realign the door properly or the door closer may need balanced all of which should only take ten to twenty minutes. This is really preventative maintenance and if kept up hardware and doors can last several decades. I believe this bill can actually be seen as a cost saving measure over time as an annual inspection will point out issues that can be addressed before actual replacement is needed. SB 112 does not require hardware to be updated to current code but rather repaired or replaced with like functioning hardware within 18 months of the reported issue. SB 112 is not a rip and replace bill that will be costly but rather a common sense approach to insuring our children are in safe and secure buildings. The thought behind SB112 was not to create a costly burden to schools but rather to provide much needed enhancement to safety and security in all our schools.

SB 112 as originally drafted contained a fine associated with noncompliance and vague language as to older existing hardware. After an interested party meeting it was decided to add language that clarified that existing hardware and doors would be inspected for compliance to the code that was in existence when the door and hardware was originally installed. There was a further discussion on the necessity of a civil penalty and Im happy to say that civil penalties have been removed from the bill. I strongly urge the House Commerce and Labor Committee refer the bill to the full house for passage.

Respectfully Submitted
Timothy J. Cassell