

**Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee  
HB 33 (Edwards) Operating Budget**

**Critical Incident School Mapping Program  
for  
Law Enforcement and First Responders**

**Public Testimony  
May 9, 2023**

Chairman Schafer, Vice Chair Landis and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on HB 33 (Edwards) Operating Budget regarding a request for critical incident mapping program to assist law enforcement and first responders when responding to an emergency at Ohio's k-12 schools. My name is Joseph Hanson, with Vice President, Critical Response Group.

For background, in 2019, I left active duty as a Marine Raider and Special Operations Officer, and I served as the ground force commander for hundreds of combat operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere. I am now back home in the Midwest with my wife and one year old son, and I work with public safety to teach lessons learned for communicating during critical incidents. My goal is to bring our hard-fought lessons learned home, such as collaboration and interoperability to increase public safety preparedness, and to save lives.

One of the foundational communication tools used in Special Operations is the gridded reference graphic, or GRG. The GRG combines a gridded overlay with high-resolution overhead imagery enabling all mission participants to communicate off of a map about unfamiliar locations.

Coming home, we realized that the concept would increase the safety of our children's schools by enabling collaboration between first responders during emergencies at unfamiliar locations like schools. Similar legislation has passed in *Wisconsin, Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, Delaware, and Virginia*. *There is pending legislative efforts in New York, Georgia, Texas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska.*

These maps are universal for locations and are predicated on accurate overhead imagery with a grid overlay, creating what amount to a simple game of "battleship". Letters run across the top of the map, numbers down the left-hand side, and north is always up. Each floor receives a map and all common language is labeled on the map for ease of communications. Easy to read, accurate, and accessible maps are the base for all movement and communication during a response to a critical incident at a school. This is the most essential tool during an emergency, and without it we have no common language to communicate about location.

In the event of a critical incident at a school, you could have 10-15 different agencies show up within the first 15 minutes. The majority of those responders have never worked together and are not familiar with the school in question. This is likely the most stressful and confusing day of their careers. An accurate map that is accessible to public safety both digitally and physically is the foundational tool to communicate about a location.

Since Ohio already requires schools to submit maps as part of their emergency management plan, we are seeking an amendment that would require the maps to meet the critical incident mapping data outlined above. We have met with law enforcement and first responders across Ohio, who have agreed this mapping would provide a critical foundation in an emergency response and allow first responders to communicate accurate location information confidently and immediately, which we know can provide

lifesaving seconds/minutes in response time. The program would provide funding to Ohio School Safety for all k-12 schools in Ohio to receive competitive grants to secure critical incident mapping services. The funding requested is approximately \$6 million in SFY 24 and \$7 million in SFY 25, which is based on \$3,700 per school. Through the grants, each school would have the ability to choose the vendor that meets the data requirements. As someone who has worked with school leaders and law enforcement to encourage the mapping of thousands of schools across our country, I know firsthand how valuable and necessary accurate mapping is for a successful response. I know that this amendment will make Ohio schools safer. I respectfully ask you for your support for this proposal.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. I am available to ask any questions you may have at this time.