

SB 112 Senate Testimony
Ohio Senate Education Committee
December 12, 2023

Chairman Brenner, Vice-chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and Committee Members. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to SB 112 and the many benefits the Ohio Childhood Safety Act would create.

My name is Jayson Karas. I am a Principal Technical Committee Member of the National Fire Protection Association's NFPA 80 Standard for Fire Doors and Other Opening Protectives and NFPA 105 Standard for Smoke Doors and Other Opening Protectives. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is a U.S.-based international nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property, and economic loss due to fire, electrical, and related hazards. The NFPA's mission is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education. I am not a representative of the National Fire Protection Association and am solely giving my testimony as a subject matter expert. I have twenty-six years of experience installing and maintaining fire-rated doors and hardware in healthcare, education, and high-security projects.

After reading through SB 112, I would like to point out the most important factors of the bill and dispel some misinformation from my experience.

SB 112 would, in my opinion, tie in directly with the Ohio School Safety Center's Emergency Management Plan by including the requirement of schools to conduct annual inspections of ingress, egress, security, fire, and smoke-rated doors as they are critical components to the safety of the occupants in educational institutions and must function to remain compliant per the NFPA 101 Life Safety Code. Paired together with a school's Emergency Management Test (EMT), a living Life Safety Plan would be able to quickly identify and document locations of fire, security, ingress, and egress doors. This would also benefit Emergency Services in aiding their preparedness and response to an emergency by visual layout of the facility's floor plan and by identifying areas of protection or vulnerability, and to be able to communicate that information with those on site.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Department of Education (ED), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) created SchoolSafety.gov to share actionable recommendations to keep school communities safe. SchoolSafety.gov aims to help schools prevent, protect, mitigate, respond to, and recover from a range of school safety threats, hazards, and emergency situations. -credit dhs.gov The resources provided by the Department of Homeland Security are of note as they partner with schools and offer tools for emergency readiness. The readiness of fire, ingress, and egress doors fall under the Emergency Operations Plan, or Emergency Management Plan, here in Ohio. These doors, when properly maintained and inspected, will remain in a constant state of readiness.

Like education, healthcare facilities face the same threats to the safety of their facility's occupants. In July 2016, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services set forth requirements for the annual inspection and testing of fire and smoke doors. Full compliance with this requirement was on January 1, 2018. CMS has adopted the 2012 NFPA Life Safety Code and the 2010 NFPA 80 Standard for Fire Doors and Other Opening Protectives. The regularly scheduled inspection and functional testing of these types of doors is crucial. Transitioning to an annual inspection was more manageable than one would think. I was working on a healthcare campus in central Minnesota with hundreds of doors falling under CMS's Annual Inspection requirement. Our team was able to transition to the new condition within twelve months. The inspection and testing process followed the NFPA 80 Standard, and the thirteen-point visual inspection process and various sub-inspection points as provided in Chapter 5, along with an outline of what is required to record the inspection. Once a program is in place, it is straightforward to maintain and manage.

The Door Safety Inspection process is simple; in most inspections, the egress and emergency doors are compliant. But in the unfortunate circumstances of a fire, an emergency medical situation, and an active intruder, it only takes one non-compliant door that could have saved lives. Periodic inspection and testing ensure that a facility's doors are in a constant state of readiness and can function as designed. This process also reminds facility administrators of their ongoing life safety obligations to everyone in their buildings. If enacted, the Ohio Childhood Act will save lives.

I want to thank the Education Committee for the time to speak and Senator Michael Rulli for introducing SB 112. I would be happy to take any questions at this time.

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