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Bringing the world of Leadership into Focus
BUILDING SAFER, STRONGER FUTURES

Ohio Senate Bill 290

Good Afternoon. It is an honor to be with you today. I am Dr. Kevin Eberle, a safety and leadership consultant. I am a former COO and School principal from Buffalo, NY. Also, before my tenure in education, I began my career as a police officer and a Tactical team member responding to many emergency situations in Hampton, VA. The span of my professional career has reached 45 years. As Neil has stated, I am also here in support of Senate Bill 290. With a Knox Box installation, many schools, businesses, and houses of worship will have an immediate entry point for those emergency personnel to approach any serious situation, for an efficient and timely response.

As a former police officer, I was placed in difficult situations when the need to enter buildings was stymied. In most cases, when an emergency was imminent, forced entry was required. This could be breaking windows, using crash bars to force open doors, or, in barricaded situations, battering rams were used. As a tactical officer, I remember situations where entry team members were placed in arms way when attempting to breach a building. A Knox Box solution would give emergency personnel a quicker way to enter the building without placing them in dangerous situations. Also, the unnecessary structural damage would have been eliminated if a Knox Box had been accessible.

Again, Fire Departments have been using this device for many years. Unfortunately, with today's emergency response situations, the Police and law enforcement agencies must be included in this solution. I was a school principal for over 25 years, and in many of our lockdown procedures, inquiry had always been a top concern on how emergency personnel were to enter a building when everyone was secured in their assigned rooms during a lockdown. This is a current dilemma today. Lockdown procedures are broken upon the arrival of emergency personnel. Many times, administrators or managers leave their secured rooms to open doors for personnel.

I have always led as a school principal and COO with a “What IF” mentality. What would we all do if we heard an unknown loud noise right here, right now? What are the procedures in place? Call 911? Run, Hide, and fight? Lock the doors? Even with procedures in place and practicing drills, emergency personnel need to get in. As a principal, we would practice

table-top exercises for the “What If” scenarios, but we still needed to breach the procedures to let someone in.

I truly believe that installing Knox Box will keep people safe within buildings while emergency personnel respond and enter buildings with little to no delays. The overall philosophy of thinking as an entire community is the essence to our story. Everyone must have a shared vision that is consistent with the overall objective of keeping people safe. As with current laws in place for smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and sprinkler systems, I believe this legislation is necessary for a proactive, preventative measure in emergency response and recovery.

Eliminating Response Delays

Senate Bill 290 provides a **mandated, tangible, and immediate solution** to the life-threatening delay caused by inefficient building access. The requirement to install an exterior secure master key box on **every public and chartered nonpublic school building** directly solves the core problem with access.

Challenge to Entry (The Status Quo)	**SB 290 Solution (The Knox Box)**
Minutes Lost to destructive forced entry (battering rams, breaching doors).	**Immediate Access** via master keys, saving critical seconds when lives are at risk.
Compromised Protocol by staff breaking lockdown to open doors for police.	**Maintained Lockdown Integrity**; first responders gain secure, exterior access without involving staff.
Lack of Information forces responders to navigate buildings blindly after entry.	**Situational Awareness** via the required inclusion of updated **master keys, access cards, and building maps**.

A Shared Vision for a Safer Ohio

- **Standardization of Safety:** This bill codifies a proven security measure, already relied upon by Fire Departments for decades, and extends its benefit to **Law Enforcement Agencies**. It ensures consistency in emergency response across every school, providing a predictable and rapid access method for all first responders.
- **National Momentum:** Ohio is joining a national movement. Secure key box legislation has already been passed in states like **Texas, North Carolina, and Utah**,

supported by law enforcement agencies and recommended by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Conclusion

This is a bill about time—the time lost fumbling for keys or smashing through windows, and the time saved that can be dedicated to neutralizing a threat or providing aid.

The Knox Box is not just a key repository; it is a **vital bridge** that allows emergency personnel to move directly from response to action. By passing SB 290, this body will ensure that every school in the state is equipped for the most **efficient and timely emergency response possible.**