

Dear Members of the Ohio Legislative Education Committee,

I write to you today on behalf of Holy Family School to respectfully urge your support for legislation that would allow Ohio townships to provide dedicated security services to private and chartered schools within their jurisdiction.

The safety of our children is not a partisan issue, nor is it limited to public institutions. Every child in Ohio deserves a secure learning environment—regardless of the type of school they attend. Allowing townships to extend security services to private and chartered schools strengthens the safety net for all students and reinforces the shared responsibility we hold for protecting our communities.

At Holy Family School, we are blessed to partner with Officer Marc Peluso and the Poland Township Police Department. Their presence and partnership are vital to the security and wellbeing of our students and staff. Their impact reaches far beyond responding to emergencies.

**Enhanced Security and Rapid Response:**

A School Resource Officer (SRO) provides immediate, on-site response to threats, including the unthinkable possibility of an active shooter. The daily presence of a trained officer serves as a powerful deterrent to crime and ensures that safety concerns are addressed quickly and professionally.

**Preventive Mentorship and Education:**

School Resource Officers educate students on bullying prevention, digital safety, and the law. More importantly, they serve as mentors and positive role models. Students learn to see law enforcement not as distant authority figures, but as trusted adults who care about their wellbeing.

**Improved Relationships and Community Trust:**

By building meaningful relationships with students and families, officers strengthen trust between law enforcement and the community. This proactive engagement improves communication, reduces misunderstandings, and fosters mutual respect.

**Support for School Leadership and Staff:**

SROs assist administrators in developing safety protocols, conducting incident investigations, and identifying at-risk students. Their expertise reduces the burden on teachers and administrators, allowing educators to focus on their primary mission: teaching and nurturing young minds.

**Alignment with School Mission and Community Safety:**

For faith-based and private institutions like ours, safety is inseparable from our mission of care and protection. Officer Peluso and the Poland Township Police Officers are not simply security personnel—they are vital members of our community. Their presence creates a secure and supportive environment where children can grow academically, socially, and spiritually.

This legislation would not only enhance school safety—it would affirm that all Ohio students deserve equal protection and access to preventative, relationship-centered safety services. Empowering townships to provide these services ensures consistency, preparedness, and stronger community partnerships statewide.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Ohio's children. We respectfully ask for your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Tod Morris, Principal

Holy Family School

Youngstown Diocese

Poland, Ohio 44514