



**Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police  
Senate Bill 318 – Proponent Testimony  
Senate Education Committee**

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on behalf of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police in support of **Senate Bill 318**.

The Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) represents law enforcement executives from municipal, township, university, and other law enforcement agencies across the State of Ohio. Our members are deeply committed to public safety, community trust, and the protection of Ohio's children—regardless of the type of school they attend.

**Senate Bill 318** is a narrowly tailored, commonsense measure that clarifies existing law and ensures that chartered nonpublic schools have the same opportunity as public school districts to engage school resource officer (SRO) services. Specifically, SB 318 authorizes chartered nonpublic schools to contract for SRO services in the same manner as school districts under continuing law. It also expressly permits township police departments to provide SRO services to chartered nonpublic schools located within their jurisdiction.

The need for this legislation arose following a September 2025 formal opinion issued by Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost regarding Ohio Revised Code section 3313.951. In that opinion, the General Yost concluded that, under current statutory authority, township police departments are not authorized to enter into memoranda of understanding with chartered nonpublic schools for the provision of SRO services. As a result, several existing or proposed SRO arrangements were placed in legal uncertainty, despite the demonstrated public safety value of these programs.

From a law enforcement perspective, SROs play a critical role in school safety by fostering positive relationships, identifying potential threats early, and coordinating rapid responses during emergencies. These benefits are not limited to public schools. Chartered nonpublic schools educate tens of thousands of Ohio students and face the same security challenges as public schools. Preventing them from accessing SRO services—particularly when a township police department is the most logical and capable provider—creates unnecessary gaps in student safety.

Importantly, SB 318 does not mandate SRO programs, expand police authority, or impose new costs on school districts or townships. Instead, it simply restores local decision-making authority by allowing schools and law enforcement agencies to voluntarily enter into agreements that meet their shared safety needs.

The Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police strongly supports SB 318 because it:

- Clarifies statutory authority in response to the Attorney General's opinion;
- Promotes equitable access to school safety resources for all students;
- Preserves local control and voluntary partnerships; and
- Enhances the ability of law enforcement agencies to proactively protect children and school staff.

For these reasons, the OACP respectfully urges the Committee to favorably consider and advance Senate Bill 318.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We would be pleased to serve as a resource to the Committee as this legislation moves forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Heinz von Eckartsberg (ret.)  
Chair, OACP Legislative Committee