

Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you all for the opportunity to speak today on Senate Bill 82. My name is Keisha Taylor; and on February 1, 2017, I started a petition on [change.org](https://www.change.org) called the Alianna Alert, which would notify parents within an hour if their child has not arrived at school. The petition now has 4,393 signatures of concerned citizens in support of this bill.

The number one question asked of me, upon learning of my petition, is do I know the family? Did my children attend school with Alianna? The answer is no. I humbly say, that I am just a mother, who has three daughters, ages 6, 11 and 15. My heart broke for Alianna's family when I heard the news that she would not return home, and this heart break turned into outrage after finding out that the school had not reported her absent. I thought of my own 15 year old daughter and how hurt, disappointed, and angry I would feel having thought she was safe at school only to learn that she never made it. Nine hours went by before Alianna's mother knew that her daughter never arrived. Nine hours.

The purpose of this bill is to require, by Ohio law, that every school in the state, notify parents if their child has not arrived to school within one hour of the start of the school day. One hour is ample time. It is doable. Many students who get themselves to school leave anywhere from 30 to 90 minutes before school starts, so an hour after the day officially begins is more than reasonable for schools to report an absence. Some schools have inaccurately reported, after hearing of my proposal, that they do have a notification system in place and most of those schools have embellished their time frame of said notification. I know that personally to be true because my oldest daughter attends a school outside of our home district due to intradistrict enrollment. Last week, I received a text message from my daughter's school, time stamped at 5:35 pm notifying me of an absence that day. That is way too long. We have to hold our schools more accountable. What happened to Alianna is in no way the fault of her school. However had her parents been notified that morning, rather than at the end of the day due to her mother's call to the school, more could have been done.

I have heard comments from other parents that their school already alerts parents with an hour. My home district of Cleveland Heights does, as well; at least at the elementary level. We need to make this a policy across the board. Not just for schools that have time. Not just for schools in the suburbs. Not just for your children. But for ALL children.

I am fortunate enough to drop my girls off at school every morning and watch them walk into the door. My husband picks them up after school. This bill is not for me. We have to stop waiting until a tragedy happens to us, or someone we know to get involved. We tend to wait until it matters to us. Well I cannot wait, and I will not wait. I ask that Alianna's name be put in the law, to remind us of the sacrifice of her short lived 14 year old life. To remind everyone that she mattered, and that she did not die in vain.

Ladies and gentlemen, the world is changing. The world has changed. We need policies in place to further ensure the safety of our children in the world we now live. Your support of Senate Bill 82, tells the 4,393 citizens who have signed this petition that you are listening. It tells them that even if they do not reside in a school district that looks out for them, there are other parents, other citizens, and the state of Ohio is looking out for them. Other great ideas for change have

sprung up since this horrible tragedy. Ideas like additional busing, and demolishing these abandoned houses that litter our community. Although relevant, they require funding. This bill requires no funding whatsoever. It just requires accountability. Let us do the right thing today, and pass this bill into law.

Chairwoman and members of the committee this completes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions.