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Senate Education Committee
House Bill 123: Proponent Testimony
Scott DiMauro – President, Ohio Education Association
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Good morning, Chair Lehner and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Scott DiMauro. I am in my 29th year in education, which includes 16 years in the classroom as a high school social studies teacher. I currently serve as President of the Ohio Education Association (OEA). On behalf of the OEA's 122,000 members, thank you for this opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on House Bill 123.

OEA welcomes the intent of House Bill 123 to address the underlying causes of violence. The bill would require that school buildings serving students in grades 6-12 have an anonymous reporting system to report threats of violence or other safety issues. It would also set up teams to assess building threats and require that the state develop a model threat assessment plan. Threat assessment programs would seek to identify students who are at risk of harming themselves or others and provide needed support to those students. This early intervention is an integral component of a school safety strategy.

Additionally, House Bill 123 requires students in grades 6-12 to receive instruction regarding suicide awareness and prevention, violence prevention, and social inclusion. In April 2018, the Center for Disease Control reported that the national suicide rate among youth, ages 10 to 17, had increased by 70 percent between 2006 and 2016. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, suicide was the second leading cause of death for Ohioans between the age of 15 and 34 in 2019. By educating our students about these issues, we can make a positive impact on the health and well-being of Ohio's students and in doing so, change these troubling statistics.

In summary, OEA believes HB 123 provides proven intervention strategies to ensure safe and nurturing learning environments for students. OEA urges passage of House Bill 123, the Safety and Violence Education Act. Please contact me if you have any questions.

