

Proponent Testimony in Support of HB 123
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Chairman Lehner and members of the committee. Thank you for welcoming me to the capital today. My name is Thomas Jones. I am the Vice President of Strategy and Government Affairs with ALICE Training Institute. In November of 2019 my company, NaviGate Prepared, based in New Philadelphia, Ohio, merged with ALICE Training Institute located in Medina, OH. We currently work with over 50% of school districts in Ohio with our emergency preparedness and threat assessment software.

I have come to Columbus today in support of HB 123, a bill that will continue to enhance school safety in the state. As a bit of background, our NaviGate Prepared emergency management software is used by our Ohio schools to meet compliance with ORC 33123.536.

While we believe the bill is moving in the right direction, we do have a couple of suggestions on some improvements that we hope you will consider incorporating into the bill.

In adding the behavioral threat assessment training, we want to make sure that Ohio schools are not excluded from using providers like ALICE and others which use protocols and software that are in compliance with The National Threat Assessment Center's model. In order to ensure this, and also strengthen the legislation, we recommend adding this as a qualifying program. The National Threat Assessment Center was developed by the United States Secret Service and is the model upon which just about all threat assessment programs utilized in this country and others are based.

We also believe it is important to establish qualifications for threat assessment instructors. Currently the bill is silent on instructor qualification. Adding a requirement that instructors be experienced in performing actual threat assessment is crucial.

We would be pleased to provide the committee with some suggestion language on both these issues.

Finally, the bill currently only adopts these new requirements for grades 6-12, while research and the evidence around behavioral threat assessment shows that threat assessment is recommended for grades K-12. The ideation around violence toward self and/or others can start in the primary grades and early identification is a key component toward getting these individuals off a path toward violence and onto a more successful path. We would recommend expanding the requirements of the bill through all grades and if not in this legislation, it certainly should be something the General Assembly consider in the near future as it is the lower grades where we see the greatest opportunities for successful intervention.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify today and I would welcome your questions.