

Ohio House Bill 99 Testimony

Troy Johnson

Greetings and thank you: Chairman LaRe, Vice Chairman Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland and all the members of the Criminal Justice Committee.

Background & Experience: I have over 30 years of experience in law enforcement. I served the citizens of the State of Ohio as a Trooper, Sergeant and Lieutenant in the Ohio State Highway Patrol and I currently serve the citizens of Gallia County as the Chief Deputy for the for the Gallia County Sheriff's Office. I also hold the position of Director of Safety & Transportation for the Gallipolis City School District.

Education: I hold an Associates in Police Science from Hocking College, a Bachelor Certificate in Divinity and a Masters of Transportation Administration from the Ohio School Boards Association. I am a certified A.L.I.C.E. (Alert-Lockdown-Inform-Counter-Evacuate) Instructor, R.A.I.D.E.R. (Rapid-Deployment-Awareness-Intervention-Decisiveness-EMS-Recovery) Instructor and a graduate of the Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command.

Testimony: Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today on a subject matter that I am extremely passionate about. That subject matter is saving lives. Frankly, I wish with all my heart and soul that we lived in a world where a Committee Hearing like this one, was not necessary. But as you know, that is not an accurate depiction of the world we live in. We live in a world full of violence and we are surround by individuals capable of violence.

I am here today to briefly talk about saving lives. I live and work in a rural area of the state where the presence of law enforcement can be very scarce. Our county encompasses 445 square miles and three separate school districts spread across thirteen school buildings.

All of my training, all of my research and all of my experience in law enforcement has shown me that seconds save lives. Our law enforcement officers in Gallia County are spread too thin to be able to provide an acceptable response time to an active shooting event. The rhetorical question I would ask you here today, is what is an acceptable response time? On average, a person is shot every thirteen seconds during an active shooting event. How many thirteen second intervals are acceptable?

Introducing the possibility of a firearm into a school safety zone should be decision that weighs heavily on any school board and superintendent in the state. I wish there was funding to allow us to provide each school building that requested it, an officer. But that is simply not possible.

Our school district has operated a Crisis Management Response Team since 2016. Our team members are comprised of volunteers that highly trained in de-escalation tactics, building clearing, medical response and rapid evacuation. Our staff members train side-by-side with our law enforcement officers and are required to meet double the requalification standards of a certified police officer in Ohio.

Having a program that includes an extensive background and application process and one that is fully committed to train regularly is essential for success. We have a moto: Armatures practice until they get is right, professional practice until they cannot get it wrong.

During functional active shooting drills, the longest that a role player has gone without being confronted by a Crisis Management Response Team Member was 2:37. The shortest time was :13 seconds. There are schools in parts of our county that it would take law enforcement 20-30 minutes to arrive.

This bill affords our school districts the mechanism and the opportunity to protect our students, our staff members and our citizens. I believe that this bill will allow for drastically quicker response times to violent situations and ultimately save lives.

Closing: Thank you Chairman LaRe, Vice Chairman Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland and all the members of the Criminal Justice Committee for allowing me to speak before you today.

Questions?