



February 15, 2022

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor and esteemed members of the Senate Primary & Secondary Education Committee:

My name is John Hartman. I have been a Police Officer for 21 years and for the past seven years I have been a School Resource Officer (SRO) in the City of Delaware. Based on my experience as a licensed professional outside and inside a school setting, I write today to urge you to support SB 233, regarding school nurse licensure.

A police officer's duties are complex, requiring numerous skills, certifications, abilities, and aptitudes. With these skills an officer can serve his community with competence and effectiveness for his entire career. The underlying law enforcement skills and aptitudes need to be there, but those skills should be adapted/added to once that officer's duties become those of an SRO in the school setting.

The difference in duties and skills between a regular law enforcement officer and an SRO is one of the reasons why legislation was enacted requiring that law enforcement officers/peace officers have a minimum of specific school-setting related requirements to act as a School Resource Officer. The law requires completion of a 40-hour SRO Basic Training course for all law enforcement officers entering the school as an SRO. The law also suggests that ongoing/additional training in school-based policing be considered for SROs to maintain the skill set.

I can speak firsthand about the transition from police officer to SRO. It is a night and day difference. Many officers have quickly realized that school-based policing is not what they thought it was, don't like it, and end up returning to a patrol capacity. By getting job specific training and continued training/education the SRO is set up for success, their own and those they serve.

The example of an SRO in the schools is a perfect comparison to that of a school nurse. I have known many nurses over the years in a professional capacity and hold them in the highest regard. They are competent, skilled and desire to help. They are proficient in the hospital setting and navigating all of the nuances that that environment holds. A school nurse is very much like an SRO in that regard. They have the core qualities, but they are now in a completely different environment. They now have FERPA to deal with in addition to HIPPA, daily scheduled medication plans, emergency medical needs, allergies, IEPs, 504s, Emergency operation plans, inclusion in Crisis Response Teams, first aid/aed emergency response training for staff, not to mention the unplanned ill children and other staff/student emergencies. The basic foundational job of both the school nurse and the SRO are the same but add the school environment and the duties are drastically different.

The SRO, trained and implemented correctly, is an asset to any school setting. The same is to be said of the school nurse. They play a vital role and should be provided with the proper training certification and supports

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to be successful. This will enhance the health, safety and well-being of students and staff.

It is paramount that, like a SRO, the School Nurse role be defined. Job specific education, basic and continuing, be identified, offered, and implemented as a pre-requisite for the role change. This approach will prepare the nurse for success in her performance, the school in its overall wellness and, likewise, reduce liability and unnecessary issues that may arise from negligence. SB 233 will restore the training necessary for a school nurse to appropriately fulfill his or her duties, and I respectfully urge you to support the bill.

Respectfully,

Officer John Hartman #48

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