



VETERANS AND
PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 6/7/21

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Organization Representing: _____

Testifying on Bill Number: 168

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: _____

Good afternoon,

My name is Coy Sudvary and I am the principal at Wellsville Jr./Sr High School. I have just completed my 20th year in education and my 13th as a high school principal. I am writing this testimony in support of Senate Bill 168. In my opinion we as educators need to be provided as many resources as possible to keep our students in Ohio schools safe. Senate Bill 168 looks to add resources and additional levels of support to protect our schools. In my years of education, one area of increasing concern is securing the safety of our students. However, it is typically left up to local districts to provide the training and protocols to protect our most valuable assets. Many districts do not have the personnel or the finances to adequately provide the top of the line security and safety training to protect our schools. School personnel rarely have the training, knowledge, or coursework necessary to effectively secure buildings. Our jobs as educators have evolved over the years. During my teacher/principal preparation there were little to no conversations or courses to provide us with the knowledge of school safety. As my career in education has progressed so has the threats associated with our schools.

While I was principal at Buckeye Local High School we were fortunate to train with S.T.A.R.T. They were able to provide us with the training and resources we were missing in our safety plans. Having the staff of S.T.A.R.T. completing our training gave us new knowledge and awareness in school safety. The experience of having military veterans and law enforcement plan, organize and train our staff was a game changer. The safety professional development meetings became consistent and embedded into the building's culture for the first time. The training and drills were all encompassing and included many different scenarios of possible attacks. For the first time we included local EMS personnel, staff, students, and hospital personnel in some of our mock drills. No longer were we going through the motions with drills, the drills had meaning and purpose. This couldn't have been possible without the knowledge, experience and expertise of our trainers. We were fortunate to have benefitted from being the home school of Senator Hoagland. Senator Hoagland through his military career and passion for safety, was able to improve our plans and our training. Without his support we wouldn't have been able to properly secure our facilities.

I feel that Senate Bill 168 by establishing the Mobile Training Team would go a long way with increasing the knowledge and safety of our school personnel.

Having a consistent and available training resource available to schools will provide a much needed support in our effort to secure schools. As I have transitioned to a new school, I have seen firsthand the inconsistencies with training, policies and procedures from district to district. Having a constant resource to guide us as administrators in securing the safety of our students is a must. As we have supported schools over the recent pandemic with orders and financing, we have not done an adequate job in providing the same support for the biggest threat our schools face which is the threat of violence.

While I am fortunate to have a local police officer in the building each day, most schools cannot say the same. Not only is it a level of safety and security, it is a deterrent for potential attacks. Having an armed officer in the building assists in the protection of our students and staff. Senate Bill 168 will ensure the training of armed personnel in the building. Having an authorized school safety designee consistently across the state will show how proactive we are in the protection of our schools. I cannot say enough about the importance of having consistency with the safety training in our schools. We cannot be too prepared. We must provide a process for the training and monitoring of safety in our schools. Senator Hoagland is well versed in securing the safety of our schools, I experienced it firsthand. I ask that you trust his years of service and experience in protecting our freedom by supporting SB 168.