

**Proponent Testimony of
Joe Charles, Owner
360 Safe Solutions
on SB 168
before the Ohio Senate Veterans & Public Safety Committee
June 8, 2021**

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas and fellow members of the Senate Veterans & Public Safety Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 168.

My name is Joe Charles, I own 360 Safe Solutions, which works with schools in Ohio and other states. I help them with standard safety drills and prepare them for emergency situations such as an active shooter. My expertise is in the technology that provides schools with proper communication, accountability and reunification tools during safety and emergency situations.

I am also the father of 3 children that graduated from Ohio schools, and I serve as the President of the Woodridge Local School District's Foundation.

Over the last 10 years of working with schools both public and private, the one consistent thing I have seen is the inconsistency in school safety training. Senate Bill 168 would address this problem directly by standardizing training and providing tools for schools across the state use in the case of an emergency.

Before I began working in this space, I was unaware that there is no standard plan for even basic drills such as a fire drill, every school can create their own way of running a drill, managing the communications during the drill, accounting for students and staff during the drill and reporting or not reporting the outcomes after the drill.

What I soon recognized is that Ohio has 611 public school districts, which means we have about 611 different "best practices" regarding school safety with schoolteachers and administrators. The first responders in any school emergency are the teachers and staff in the building at the time of the incident.

Schools in Ohio and across the country are unprepared for an actual emergency. SB 168 provides the framework for school safety programs. The safety of our children is foundational.

School superintendents, school board members and other decision makers within a school district make decisions every day based on Ohio standards regarding education curriculum and testing. We have established frameworks for what to teach and how to test students with standardized testing.

What school leaders across Ohio do not have is a standard way of keeping our children safe, a way to account for each child regardless of where they are in the school, a way to communicate with parents in real time during and emergency and a way to efficiently reunite parents and children immediately after an incident.

SB 168 provides the infrastructure and training to accomplish all of these important goals. It provides a structure with a chain of command for school administrators to utilize for safety training programs and creates quarterly qualifications for each school employee.

We need to prioritize school safety as importantly as we do other day-to-day school activities. Thank you to all the sponsors of SB 168, to bring this critical safety training to our schools to provide a consistent way to protect our future.

I urge a favorable report of SB 168, and I am happy to answer questions.