

6-7-2021

VETERANS and PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Larry O. Elliott

49535 Katherine Drive, St. Clairsville Ohio 43950

Testimony regarding S.B. 168

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Minority Member Thomas and members of the Veterans and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to offer proponent testimony of Senate Bill 168.

My name is Larry Elliott. I've had the opportunity to devote my professional career as an educator serving in roles as a teacher, counselor and school superintendent. I am here to advocate for the passage of SB 168.

A little background, in my capacity as school superintendent I had the good fortune to meet Senator Hoagland while developing safety protocols for my district. At that time schools around the country were struggling to provide security for students, teachers, parents and community members in the wake of the Sandy Hook shootings.

While working with Senator Hoagland, he impressed me as a professional security expert who worked tirelessly in helping assist my district's safety and security team develop adequate plans for my schools and others schools around Ohio. Senator Hoagland has continually impressed me as having a passion, commitment and focus to keep Ohio's students safe and secure in their schools, then and now.

Today I am asking for this committee join with Senator Hoagland to safeguard children in Ohio.

The adoption of uniform guidelines and standards of operation and responses has been a key focus of Senator Hoagland and this commitment to protecting our children is evidenced in the bringing forth of SB 168.

Further, I have had the opportunity to discuss school security weaknesses with the Senator on numerous occasions in my role as a school superintendent.

A few common issues we both identified were the response protocols and lack of operational standards utilized in Ohio schools and the lack of safety and security backgrounds of Ohio educators.

It has been my experience that school safety plans in Ohio are a collection of varying responses and lack standardization. This is not a ding on school administrators, Boards of Education, or local law enforcement.

Rather it is bringing to light the lack of consistent training and uniform guidelines of operation and standards along with the knowledge of evolving best practices in safety issues.

The adoption of S.B. 168 will address those short comings and provide for a degree of professional guidelines being available to Ohio school districts. in my opinion. It will mandate the adoption of a minimum standard of uniform guidelines of operation currently lacking in Ohio's schools statewide.

The Ohio Mobile Training Team legislation, SB 168, will provide uniform guidance to schools in the following:

- Identification and responses to incidents of domestic violence of children,
- Provide for the identification and intervention of missing and abused children,
- Assist in the development and review of security plans and response protocols,
- Assist in the development of communications with stakeholders involved with the schools on all levels, Federal, state and local law enforcement,
- Mandate and codify that emergency drills and test be conducted in a uniform and timely manner,
- That school emergency response plans be made available for access and review by Ohio Mobile Training Team.
- Codify the proficiencies of armed security placed and operational in Ohio Schools.

In closing, it is my firm belief the adoption of the Ohio Mobile Training Team, Senate Bill 168, in Ohio will bring with it a minimum standard of uniform guidelines of operation.

Our children deserve a learning environment that meets a minimum level of safety guidelines that are developed and approved by safety professionals. The Ohio Mobile Training Team, SB 168 will meet that need.

Please consider ensuring the safety of Ohio's children. Please support SB 168.

Thank you for your time and consideration.