



LOCAL GOVERNMENT,  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND  
VETERANS AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date JAN 21, 2019

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Organization Representing: SME

Testifying on Bill Number: SB 147

Testimony:  Verbal  Written  Both

Testifying As:  Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist?  Yes  No

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_  
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SB 147 is clearly a step in the right direction toward mitigating the risks associated with violent threats in our schools. The nature of school shooting threats, for example, must be managed by the faculty, staff, and administrators at each school. The School Marshall Program provides schools with the critical resource they require to guide them through enhancing their respective all-hazards plans and preparing to mitigate the threats they inherently face.

Current recommendations and guidance from the Department of Homeland Security emphasize the run-hide-fight approach when confronted with active shooting situations in schools. This change occurred just a few years ago when we were working with the Buckeye School District on counter-active-shooter programs. The nature of the threat of an active shooter is more akin to that of a fire than a tornado. The primary reason that we have not lost a life to school fire in generations is that we plan for that contingency; we design appropriate responses including evacuation and accountability procedures, and then rehearse.

That is exactly the type of approach that the School Marshall Program supports and enables in Ohio schools. In the Buckeye School District in Mingo Junction, we implemented a similar approach in 2012-2013. In that situation, I was able to assist S.T.A.R.T. in fulfilling the role that the School Marshall Program is meant to provide. We helped administrators understand the nature of the threats that they faced, assisted them in implementing cross-functional work teams, building and refining their risk assessments, and designing and rehearsing the appropriate response plans as a unified approach. That effort ultimately led to an intervention that thwarted a potential attack.

Nothing can guarantee that school shootings or other violent attacks will not happen. But, given access to knowledgeable resources and some meaningful policy guidance, school administrators can set conditions that will mitigate the risks of an event occurring, can facilitate meaningful engagement procedures, and can prepare effective response plans should an event take place. This is what S.B. 147 offers., in my opinion, assuming that the right people are selected and trained to fulfill the School Marshall positions.

Sean Ryan, Ph.D.

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