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ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY: PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL SECURITY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

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ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY: PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL SECURITY

Thursday, September 26, 2019

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m., in room 310, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Donald M. Payne, Jr. (Chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Payne, Richmond, Rose, Underwood, Green, Clarke, King, Joyce, Crenshaw, and Guest.

Also present: Representatives Jackson Lee and Deutch.

Mr. PAYNE. The Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery will come to order.

The subcommittee is meeting today to receive testimony on "Engaging the Community: Perspectives on School Security."

Good morning and thank you, everyone who is here today.

The subcommittee is meeting to discuss community perspectives on school safety and how the Federal Government can better support local stakeholders in making our children safer.

I want to thank the witnesses for participating in today's hearing. Ms. Lauren Hogg's and Mr. Max Schachter's testimonies are ones the American public needs to hear and ones that Members of Congress should take to heart as we go about our work. A special thank you to you both for sharing your experience with us.

The Chair would also like to acknowledge Congressman Deutch, who does not sit on this committee but who represents Parkland, Florida, and has been a champion for measures to improve school safety.

I ask unanimous consent to allow Congressman Deutch to sit and question the witnesses at today's hearing.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

I am glad this hearing can build upon the school safety field hearing this subcommittee held last year in New Jersey. The 2019–2020 school year is well under way, and our kids are at risk from violence every day. As a parent of triplets, all too often I watch the news and I am terrified by what I see and hear. Tragically, school violence has taken the lives of too many American children and educators.

Now, 20 years since the Columbine High School massacre, which left 13 victims dead, our children are still incredibly vulnerable while attending school. Since Columbine and even before, our Na-

tion has been rocked by a tragic cycle of school shootings. The 2012 Sandy Hook shooting left a staggering 20 children and 6 adults dead, yet Congress fell short of passing legislation to combat gun violence in schools. In 2018, there were 24 shootings in K–12 schools around the country, including the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, that left 14 children and 3 teachers dead and a shooting at Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas, that claimed 10 victims.

The threat to our students continues. During the first half of 2019, there were 22 school shootings. Just last week, a teenager was arrested in Washington State for planning to attack a school on the 21st anniversary of Columbine. Still, the response from the Trump administration and the Republican-controlled Senate has been wholly inadequate.

After Parkland, Congress passed the Stop School Violence Act to provide funds for schools looking to improve their safety infrastructure. However, it is important to remember that school infrastructure is only one part of the solution to keep our children safe. More must be done.

In 2018, 113 people were killed or injured in school shootings in the United States. In the same year, at least 1,200 children were killed by gun violence around the country. Gun violence must be addressed both inside and outside of schools to really improve the safety of children in America. We cannot truly improve safety for children until we address these threats regardless of where they happen.

That is why the Democratic-controlled House has passed and moved multiple pieces of legislation aimed at making our children and our country safer, including universal background checks and grants for States who use red-flag laws.

Additionally, I am proud that on April 1, 2019, the House passed my bill, the CLASS Act, which would establish a council within DHS to ensure the Department coordinates its school safety activities. I hope the Senate will finally act on these measures, as the American public awaits a meaningful Congressional response.

Like the Senate, the Trump administration has failed to consider serious solutions to address school safety. Last year, the administration's Federal Commission on School Safety published a report that included no new proposals for Federal policy or funding to make schools safer. Instead, it promoted arming school personnel, a policy that both students and educator groups oppose.

Perhaps the only positive outcome from the Commission's work was the decision to establish a Federal safety clearinghouse, which the Department of Homeland Security is leading, along with the Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services. This committee will be following the roll-out of the clearinghouse later this year.

I am interested to hear from the witnesses how such a tool might be useful to them in their work to improve school safety.

Additionally, yesterday, the administration published a new planning guide to help school districts develop and maintain and customize emergency operation plans. While such guidance may be useful for districts, it does not address the root problems leading

to violence in schools, nor does it provide school districts that are stretched thin new resources to fill their school safety needs.

Our children are experiencing a new normal and one that troubles me. Active-shooter drills are the new normal in schools, and while I recognize the importance of them, I am saddened that our country has come to a place where they are necessary.

We must do more to ensure that school violence and shootings are a thing of the past and our kids feel safe when learning. We must do more to protect the next generation. This country, communities like the ones I serve, and our kids are counting on us. Citizens from across the country are speaking loudly about the need for progress on this subject matter, and we must do our best to respond.

[The statement of Chairman Payne follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

The subcommittee is meeting to discuss community perspectives on school safety, and how the Federal Government can better support local stakeholders in making our children safer. I thank the witnesses for participating in today's hearing. Ms. Lauren Hogg and Mr. Max Schachter's testimonies are ones the American public needs to hear and ones that Members of Congress should take to heart as we go about our work. A special thank you to you both for sharing your experience with us. I am glad this hearing can build upon the school security field hearing this subcommittee held last year in New Jersey. The 2019–2020 school year is well under way, and our kids are at-risk from violence every day. As a parent of triplets, all too often I watch the news and I am terrified by what I see and hear.

Tragically, school violence has taken the lives of too many American children and educators. Now, 20 years since the Columbine High School massacre, which left 13 victims dead, our children are still incredibly vulnerable while attending school. Since Columbine and even before, our Nation has been rocked by a tragic cycle of school shootings. The 2012 Sandy Hook shooting left a staggering 20 children and 6 adults dead, yet Congress fell short of passing legislation to combat gun violence in schools. In 2018, there were 24 shootings in K–12 schools around the country, including the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida that left 14 children and 3 teachers dead, and the shooting at Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas that claimed 10 victims. The threats to our students continue. During the first half of 2019, there were 22 school shootings. Just last week, a teenager was arrested in Washington State for planning to attack a school on the 21st anniversary of Columbine. Still, the response from the Trump administration and the Republican-controlled Senate has been wholly inadequate. After Parkland, Congress passed the STOP School Violence Act to provide funds for schools looking to improve their safety infrastructure. However, it is important to remember that school infrastructure is only one part of the solution to keep our children safe—more must be done. In 2018, 113 people were killed in school shootings in the United States. In the same year, at least 1,200 children were killed by gun violence around the country. Gun violence must be addressed both inside and outside of schools to really improve the safety of children in America.

We cannot truly improve safety for children until we address these threats, regardless of where they happen. That is why the Democratic-controlled House has passed or moved multiple pieces of legislation aimed at making our children, and our country, safer, including universal background checks and grants for States who use red flag laws. Additionally, I am proud that on April 1, 2019, the House passed my bill, the CLASS Act, which would establish a council within DHS to ensure the Department coordinates its school safety activities. I hope the Senate will finally act on these measures, as the American public awaits a meaningful Congressional response. Like the Senate, the Trump administration has failed to consider serious solutions to address school safety. Last year, the administration's Federal Commission on School Safety published a report that included no new proposals for Federal policy or funding to make schools safer. Instead, it promoted arming school personnel, a policy that both student and education groups oppose.

Perhaps the only positive outcome from the Commission's work was the decision to establish a Federal school safety clearinghouse, which the Department of Home-

land Security is leading along with the Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services. This committee will be following the roll out of the clearinghouse later this year. I am interested to hear from the witnesses how such a tool might be useful to them in their work to improve school safety. Our children are experiencing a new normal, and one that troubles me. Active-shooter drills are the new normal in schools, and while I recognize the importance of them, I am saddened that our country has come to a place where they are necessary. We must do more to ensure that school violence, and shootings, are a thing of the past, and our kids feel safe when learning. We must do more to protect the next generation. This country, communities like the ones I serve, and our kids are counting on us. Citizens from across the country are speaking loudly about the need for progress on this subject matter and we must do our best to respond.

Mr. PAYNE. With that, now I recognize the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from New York, Mr. King, for an opening statement.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

At the outset, let me also commend Congressman Deutch for his efforts on this and his dedication both before and ever since the tragedy in his district.

So I want to commend you for that.

Mr. Chairman, I have a prepared statement. I just want to introduce this into record. This is a vital issue, and I would just as soon go and, you know, hear the witnesses' own testimony. I will submit my statement for the record.

[The statement of Ranking Member King follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER PETER T. KING

SEPT. 26, 2019

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to welcome today's witnesses and thank them for their time.

Over the last several decades, our Nation has witnessed egregious acts of violence in schools. The tragedy of these events is felt Nation-wide and we collectively begin asking ourselves, "How did this happen?" and "Why did this happen?"

After the events at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School last year, President Trump established the Federal Commission on School Safety to provide recommendations to keep kids safe at schools.

This Commission brought together members of the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Homeland Security. The Commission was tasked to provide a view on how to keep our Nation's schools safe.

After almost a year of review, the Commission developed its final report that provides comprehensive recommendations on what we can do to better protect students, teachers, and our Nation's schools.

School security has always been a local issue. Those situated in and around our schools are logically the best suited to evaluate the needs of the schools they serve. Still, the sad reality is that many schools don't have adequate security plans in place or don't regularly practice school safety drills.

The Commission recommended in its final report that a public clearinghouse of resources be developed to assist parents, teachers, administrators, and local officials with best practices. This one-stop-shop could provide parents with information on how to talk to their children about school safety or principals with tools to assess the security of their buildings.

I'm happy to hear this new clearinghouse website is in development and will be operational soon.

Within this new clearinghouse, users will be able to find a list of existing Federal grants and programs available to State and local governments. These grants from DHS, DOD, HHS, and the Department of Education help fund things like mental health programs, school resource officer training, and the development of emergency operating plans.

There's still more that needs to be done. Children should never fear going to school. They should be focused on their academic success and not on whether they

will be a victim of violence. I hope that the testimony we hear today provides insight into what we can to do protect students in the future.

I want to again express my appreciation for our witnesses being here today. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

With that, I now recognize the Chairman of the full committee, Mr. Thompson—who is not here yet. OK.

Other Members of the subcommittee are reminded that, under the committee rules, opening statements may be submitted for the record.

[The statement of Chairman Thompson follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON

SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

I want to take a moment to specifically thank Lauren Hogg and Max Schachter for being here today. What you both went through is something no person in our country should have to, but, sadly, it happens all too often. I commend you for being able to take your pain and turn it into action so other people may not have to go through what you and your loved ones did. Your bravery and courage does not go unnoticed.

It has been 20 years since the Columbine High School massacre, where 13 people lost their lives, and schools remain vulnerable to attack. In 2007, I chaired a full committee hearing after the Virginia Tech shooting to learn more about protecting our Nation's schools. We sit here today, over 12 years later, grappling with the same issues while the country has experienced tragedy after tragedy. The names Sandy Hook Elementary School, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, and others are forever in our memories because of the tragic shootings within their walls. These tragedies not only senselessly take innocent lives but do so much to inhibit focus and learning by invoking fear and anxiety among students, faculty, and staff, alike.

Despite the obvious need for improved school security measures, the sad truth is that the Federal Government has not done enough to address school security concerns and keep weapons out of the hands of those who would do our children harm. It has become increasingly clear that we cannot depend on the Trump administration to make meaningful progress on issues related to school security. The Federal School Safety Commission did not seriously consider the issue of guns—though guns are the weapon of choice in instances of deadly school violence. In addition, the Trump administration and Republican leadership in the Senate refuse to come to the table with the House to take common-sense steps to mitigate gun violence in schools. Several States are working to help address these shortcomings and by-passing gun safety laws and making other significant investments in school security improvements. I hope that Congress and the White House can be a help rather than a hindrance to those efforts.

I applaud the Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Subcommittee for the work it continues to do on these efforts. In addition to holding this hearing and a field hearing in New Jersey, Chairman Payne has introduced legislation to make a positive impact on school security, like H.R. 1593, the CLASS Act, which would ensure that the Department of Homeland Security's various school security initiatives are coordinated. This measure passed the House in April. I look forward to continuing the important discussion today on what more Congress can do to enhance school security in America and appreciate all those joining us.

Mr. PAYNE. OK. I want to welcome our panel of witnesses.

Our first witness, who may be the youngest witness to appear before this subcommittee, is Lauren Hogg, co-founder of March for our Lives and a survivor of the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Although she may be young, Ms. Hogg is undoubtedly and unfortunately an expert on this topic. I am thankful she is here testifying for her first Congressional hearing to share her experiences.

Next we have Mr. Jared Maples, the director of New Jersey's Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness. Mr. Maples has ap-

peared before this subcommittee numerous times, and I thank him for coming back.

Next we have Ms. Kathy Martinez-Prather, who is the director of Texas School Safety Center, which is a part of the Texas State University and has been focused on improving school safety in Texas for the past 20 years.

Last, we have Mr. Max Schachter. He is the founder and CEO of Safe Schools for Alex, an organization he founded after losing his son to the school shooting in Parkland, Florida.

Again, thank you for being here today.

Without objection, the witnesses' full statements will be inserted into the record.

I now ask each witness to summarize his or her statements for 5 minutes, beginning with Ms. Hogg.

STATEMENT OF LAUREN HOGG, CO-FOUNDER, MARCH FOR OUR LIVES

Ms. HOGG. Chairman Payne, Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member King, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the subcommittee, thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to give a student's perspective on school security.

My name is Lauren Hogg, and I am a co-founder of March for our Lives, as you just heard, a junior in high school, and simply a concerned student who just wants to survive high school, both metaphorically and literally. I hope that this testimony aids in your efforts to protect students from all ZIP Codes and all races from going through what myself and my classmates have in the wake of a school shooting.

I want to preface my testimony by saying that, although I am honored to be here today, I would not be here if not for the horrendous events that took place on February 14, 2018 at my high school, Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Thirty-four of my classmates, my friends, and my teachers and coaches were injured, 17 of them fatally shot with an AR–15 in our hallways.

Additionally, although I am here today using my own experience as evidence against the militarization of schools, I am here not to ask for your sympathy; I am here to ask for your consideration and your action.

I was born after Columbine, and I was 9 years old when Sandy Hook occurred, so for most of my life, I have been force-fed the importance of school security. I still remember the first week back to school after the Sandy Hook shooting took place. I was in fourth grade, and I remember spending the first hour of school watching my teacher's shoes on the rainbow carpet as she tried, to no avail, to explain what a Code Red drill was to a room of rowdy fourth-graders.

As blood-chilling as the explanation of new security measures was, I never thought twice about them until 4 years later when my friend Alaina posed a question about why we were having the drills in the first place.

In eighth grade, Alaina Petty sat in front of me in our American History class. If I am being honest, we never really talked about school security in the context of preventing mass shootings until one day when our friend Austin returned to school after surviving

the Fort Lauderdale shooting that previous week. Together, our little friend group contemplated the effectiveness of our school safety procedures while standing in the adjacent corner of our classroom every 3 months.

Nearly a year later, the three of us were at school as nervous freshmen on Valentine's Day when, once again, we went through the Code Red drill. The only difference was that, this time, only 2 of us made it home. Alaina was 14 years old when she was murdered.

The week after Valentine's Day was full of many things. It was full of tears, it was full of funerals, and it was full of much talk around school security.

I will never forget the first morning back at school. When we first arrived to the walkway and to our campus, we were welcomed back by what seemed like every armed security officer in the whole county. It was truly a sea of black and blue uniforms. They thought they were making us feel safe, and for that I am eternally grateful. But the sight of yet another man holding a gun was enough to make many of us feel sick. Our school, which once was considered a safe haven of learning by many of us, was turned into a place of imprisonment.

Additionally, much like our National incarceration system, our school, when flooded with resource officers that ironically were considered safety precautions, became a place where my black and brown classmates were disproportionately penalized and targeted at nearly 3 times the rate of us white students.

Simply put, schools, when overmilitarized and made to seem like prisons, embed in us students the idea that violence is something to be expected at school. That is no mindset for any child to learn in.

Following the tragedy at my high school, numerous individuals, including the Secretary of Education, looked to increase the presence of firearms in schools. I, as an individual and as a representative of March for our Lives, strongly oppose the notion that arming teachers will make our schools safer.

There is a fine line between proper security and militarization, and as you examine this line, I urge you to consult those most affected: Students. Having me here as a witness is an important first step, but students must continue to be consulted.

As you examine that line, I urge you to consider noninvasive, proactive measures, not simply punitive, reactive measures. We need to invest in mental health resources of trained mental health professionals rather than relying solely on academic counselors.

To those who suggest the solution is to simply hire more school resource officers or to arm SROs, let me remind you that the armed SRO at my high school did nothing as 17 of my classmates and teachers were murdered. That SRO has, in fact, been charged with child neglect for his inaction. It was our unarmed football coach, Aaron Feis, who protected my classmates and lost his life in the process.

Furthermore, school safety cannot be addressed fully without addressing our Nation's gun violence epidemic. Given this, I encourage all of you to look into March for our Lives' comprehensive, bold plan, "A Peace Plan for a Safer America."

Instead of promoting certain punitive safety measures that I would describe as putting a bandaid on a student's bullet wounds, I ask of you to think of what is actually beneficial to us students. I hope with all of my being that gun violence prevention legislation is passed so that perhaps we won't have to be having 16-year-olds speaking at hearings on school safety.

Altogether, I hope that when it comes to school security, I won't have to someday hear a student half my age claim that they were born after Marjory Stoneman Douglas and grew up in an environment where they were force-fed the importance of school security until they went through a mass shooting of their own.

Us students are tired of being tired. Our future, the future of this country is at stake. The future of this country's safety is now in your hands.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hogg follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LAUREN HOGG

SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

Chairman Thompson, Chairman Payne, Ranking Member King, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the subcommittee, thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to give a student's perspective on school security. My name is Lauren Hogg and I am a cofounder of March For Our Lives, a junior in high school, and a concerned student who just wants to survive high school both metaphorically and literally. I hope that this testimony aids in your efforts to protect students from all ZIP codes and all races from going through what myself and my classmates have in the wake of surviving a school shooting.

I want to preface my testimony by saying that although I am honored to be here today, I would not be here if not for the horrendous events that took place on February 14, 2018 at my high school, Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Thirty-four of my classmates, friends, teachers, and coaches were injured, 17 of them fatally shot with an AR–15. Thankfully many of my classmates and I made it home that day, but we carry with us the weight of what I call active trauma. Imagine it as the recurring stages of grief every time yet another senseless shooting happens. It deeply saddens me to say that this heaviness will be something that stays with us the rest of our lives.

I was born after Columbine and I was 9 years old when Sandy Hook occurred, so for most of my life I have been force-fed the importance of school security. I still remember the first week back to school after the Sandy Hook shooting. I was in fourth grade and I remember spending the first hour of school watching my teacher's shoes on the rainbow carpet as she tried—to no avail—to explain what a code red drill was to a room of 4th-graders. As blood-chilling as the explanation of new security measures was I never thought twice about them until 4 years later when my friend Alaina posed a question about why we were having the drills. In 8th grade Alaina Petty sat in front of me in American History. If I am being honest, we never really talked about security at school in the context of preventing mass shootings until one day when our friend Austin returned to school after surviving the Fort Lauderdale airport shooting. Together our little friend group contemplated the effectiveness of our school safety procedures while standing in the adjacent corner of our classroom every 3 months. Nearly a year later, the 3 of us were at school as nervous freshman on Valentine's Day when we once again went through a code red drill; the only difference was that only 2 of us made it home this time. Alaina was 14 years old when she was killed.

The week after Valentine's Day was full of many things, it was full of tears, it was full of funerals, and it was full of much talk around school security. I'll never forget the first morning back at school. When we first arrived to the walkway into our campus, we were welcomed back by what seemed like every armed police officer in the county. It was truly a sea of black and blue uniforms, they thought they were making us feel safe and for that I am grateful, but the sight of more men carrying guns made many of us feel sick not secure.

When we finally made it through the newly-implemented single entrance after waiting in a line of students at a school of nearly 4,500, we were greeted with things

that we had never previously experienced at school. There were checkpoints, clear backpacks, and new smiling faces of School Resource Officers (SRO's) holding guns in one hand and waving us in with the other. Also I feel as though it is pertinent to know that, almost every safety implementation was put in place without the consultation of even a single student. Our administrators were our leaders, supposed to represent and implement what we as students feel, but much like political leaders so often do, forgot to listen to their constituents before speaking on behalf of them.

Our school which once was considered a safe haven of learning by many of us, was turned into a place of imprisonment. Additionally, much like our National incarnation system, our school when flooded with resource officers that ironically were considered safety precautions became a place where my black and brown classmates were disproportionately penalized and targeted at nearly 3 times the rate of us white students [1] (Appendix A). Simply put, schools when over-militarized and made to seem like prisons instead of places of learning, embed in us students the idea that violence is something to be expected at school, and that is no mindset for a child to learn in. Following the tragedy at my high school, numerous individuals, including the Secretary of Education looked to increase the presence of firearms in schools. I, as an individual, and as a representative of March For Our Lives strongly oppose the notion that arming teachers will make schools safer.

There is a fine line between proper security and militarization. As you examine this line, I urge you to consult those most affected: Students. Having me here as a witness is an important first step, but students must continue to be consulted. As you examine that line, I urge you to consider non-invasive proactive measures, not simply punitive reactive measures. We need to invest in mental health resources of trained mental health professionals, rather than relying solely on academic counselors or School Resource Officers (SRO's). Such academic counselors usually tell us they don't have time to speak about mental health, or that they have to focus on what they consider more important things like getting into college.

To those who suggest that the solution is to simply hire more School Resource Officers or to arm SRO's, let me remind you that the armed SRO at my high school did nothing as 17 of my classmates and teachers were murdered. That SRO has in fact been charged with child neglect for his inaction.[2] It was our unarmed football coach, Aaron Feis, who protected my classmates and lost his life in the process.

Furthermore, school safety cannot be addressed fully without addressing our Nation's gun violence epidemic. Given this I encourage you all to look into March For Our Lives' comprehensive bold plan, *A Peace Plan For A Safer America* (Appendix B).

Instead of promoting certain punitive safety measures that, which constitutes putting a BandAid on a bullet wounds, I ask you to think of what is actually beneficial to students. I hope with all of my being that gun violence prevention legislation is passed so that perhaps someday we won't have to be having hearings on school safety. All together I hope that when it comes to school security I won't have someday hear a student half my age claim that they were born after Marjory Stoneman Douglas and grew up being force-fed ineffective safety procedures until the day that they went through mass shooting of their own. Us students are tired of being tired. Our future, and the future of this country is at stake. The future of this country's safety is in your hands.

Thank you.

APPENDIX A

ACLU illustrates how school disciplinary policies disproportionately impact black students.

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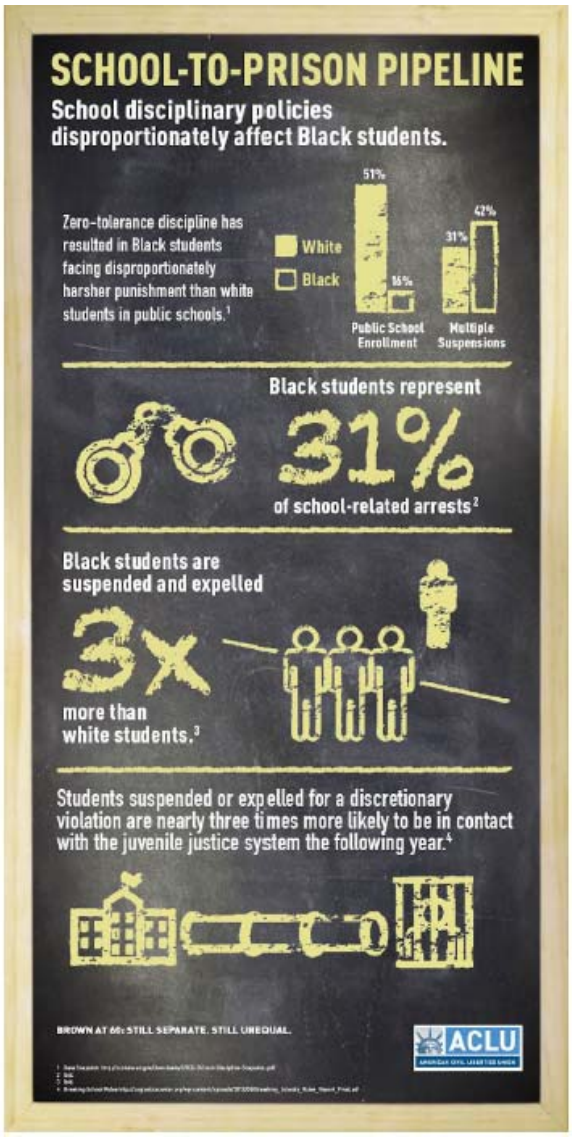
[1] Lopez, German. "Black Kids Are Way More Likely to Be Punished in School than White Kids, Study Finds." Vox.com, Vox, 5 Apr. 2018, *https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/4/5/17199810/school-discipline-race-racism-gao.*

[2] "Ex-SRO Charged with Child Neglect for 'Inaction' during Parkland Massacre." WFLA, 4 June 2019, *https://www.wfla.com/news/florida/ex-sro-charged-with-child-neglect-for-inaction-during-parkland-massacre/.*



APPENDIX B.— MARCH FOR OUR LIVES' *Peace Plan for a Safer America*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every day in America, more than 100 lives are taken by the deadly epidemic of gun violence.[3] Among young people, gun violence has become a top cause of death,

[3] Mervosh, Sarah. "Nearly 40,000 People Died From Guns in U.S. Last Year, Highest in 50 Years." *The New York Times,* The New York Times, 18 Dec. 2018, *https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/18/us/gun-deaths.html.*

second only to drug overdoses.[4] It has many root causes, including hate, poverty, and despair. It's a deeply intersectional issue, inextricably bound with our long journey for racial justice, economic justice, immigrant rights, and the rights of our LGBTQ allies. And it's amplified by the societal belief that a gun can solve our problems. Gun violence is destroying our generation. This is simply unacceptable. That's why, as survivors and students of March For Our Lives, we believe it's time for a Peace Plan for a Safer America.

The next President must act with a fierce urgency to call this crisis what it is: A National public health emergency. They must acknowledge that the level of gun violence in the United States is unprecedented for a developed nation[5]—and only bold, new solutions can move the needle on the rates of gun injuries and deaths. They must recognize that gun violence has many faces in our communities, from rural suicides to intimate partner violence to urban youth violence to violence driven by white supremacist ideologies. And they must commit to holding an unpatriotic gun lobby and gun industry accountable not just for weakening our Nation's gun laws, but also for illegal behavior in self-dealing[4] that offends and contradicts America's vast majority of responsible gun owners.

We believe in C.H.A.N.G.E.—6 bold steps that the next Presidential administration and Congress must take to address this National gun violence epidemic:

1. CHANGE THE STANDARD OF GUN OWNERSHIP.—Advocate and pass legislation to raise the National standard for gun ownership: a National licensing and registry system that promotes responsible gun ownership; a ban on assault weapons, high-capacity magazines, and other weapons of war; policies to disarm gun owners who pose a risk to themselves or others; and a National gun buy-back program to reduce the estimated 265–393 million firearms in circulation by at least 30 percent.

2. HALVE THE RATE OF GUN DEATHS IN 10 YEARS.—Mobilize an urgent and comprehensive Federal response: Declare a National emergency around gun violence and announce an audacious goal to reduce gun injuries and deaths by 50 percent in 10 years, thereby saving up to 200,000 American lives.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE GUN LOBBY AND INDUSTRY.—Hold the gun lobby and industry accountable for decades of illegal behavior and misguided policies intended to shield only themselves; reexamine the *District of Columbia* v. *Heller* interpretation of the Second Amendment; initiate both FEC and IRS investigations into the NRA, and fully repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act.

4. NAME A DIRECTOR OF GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION.—Appoint a National Director of Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) who reports directly to the President, with the mandate to operationalize our Federal goals and empower existing

[4] Parsons, Chelsea, et al. "America's Youth Under Fire." *Center for American Progress, https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/guns-crime/reports/2018/05/04/450343/americas-youth-fire/*.

[5] Parsons, Chelsea, et al. "America's Youth Under Fire: America's Youth Under Fire." *American Progress,* Center For American Progress, 2 May 2018, *https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/guns-crime/reports/2018/05/04/450343/americas-youth-fire/*.

Federal agencies such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)—agencies that have all been structurally weakened by the gun lobby. The National Director of GVP would begin by overseeing a downpayment of $250 million in annual funding for research by the CDC and other Federal agencies on gun violence prevention.

5. GENERATE COMMUNITY-BASED SOLUTIONS.—Fully fund targeted interventions addressing the intersectional dimensions of gun violence, including community-based urban violence reduction programs, suicide prevention programs, domestic violence prevention programs, mental and behavioral health service programs, and programs to address police violence in our communities.

6. EMPOWER THE NEXT GENERATION.—Automatically register eligible voters and mail voter registration cards to all Americans when they turn 18. Create the "Safety Corps," a Peace Corps for gun violence prevention. The younger generations are disproportionately affected by gun violence. They should have a say in how their country solves this epidemic.

To read the Peace Plan in its entirety, visit *www.marchforourlives.com/peaceplan.*

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you for your testimony.

I now recognize Mr. Maples to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF JARED MAPLES, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND PREPAREDNESS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. MAPLES. Chairman Payne, Ranking Member King, Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. It is an honor to speak with you and share the work my office is doing to keep the residents and visitors to New Jersey safe, especially with regard to educational institutions.

The New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness is tasked with coordinating counterterrorism, resiliency, and cybersecurity efforts across all levels of government, law enforcement, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector. We are charged with bolstering New Jersey's resources for critical infrastructure protection, preparedness, training, and Federal grants management.

Attacks against children and staff in what should be the safe haven of education is perhaps the most jarring threat we face. Recent incidents at schools across the country serve as stark reminders that schools are often targeted by those seeking to commit acts of violence.

For example, law enforcement in New Jersey, with the assistance of authorities in Delaware, prevented a potential school shooting this past June when we arrested a man possessing a loaded firearm and additional ammunition at an elementary school in Westfield, New Jersey.

The safety of our children and those charged with their care are paramount. We must do all that is necessary to provide students and staff with a sense of comfort and security in their learning environments. Parents and guardians deserve the peace of mind that their children will return to them at the end of the school day.

For that reason, Governor Murphy's administration is in sync on combining our resources to ensure the protection of our children. My office's work to protect our students would not be possible without the strong partnerships we have with local, State, and Federal agencies.

We are proud of the collaborative progress we continue to make as a State in strengthening security throughout all our institutions, including in education. However, we recognize that our work is never complete, and continual improvement is the only way to succeed in protecting New Jersey and the country.

While we provide details on our on-going efforts, please be mindful that we will always seek to continue to improve our approach toward preventing these incidents from occurring in the first place. A focus on prevention is key in stopping an incident before it starts and avoiding the need to employ response tactics. It is our goal to be first preventers as well as first responders and make certain our communities embrace a culture of preparedness that invests equally in both practices.

Heightened awareness from citizens and law enforcement, combined with a New Jersey Attorney General directive that calls for local law enforcement agencies who receive tips about suspicious activity to immediately notify my office's counterterrorism watchdog unit, led to an unprecedented increase in school-related reports to the NJSAR System.

Additionally our office, along with the FBI Newark field office, created high-level thresholds and notification protocols to ensure that all threat-to-life leads, particularly ones that involve schools, are immediately actioned to the appropriate municipal, county, State, and Federal law enforcement entities, which allows for a more standardized and faster analysis and expeditious action to mitigate threats.

We will continue to prioritize the identification of suspicious activity as well as ensure there is a clear path for reporting and addressing issues before an incident can occur through a whole-of-Government approach. We will expand innovative efforts through measures such as training school personnel, including administrators, faculty, school resource officers, custodians, and bus drivers, and the community as a whole on how to recognize and report suspicious activity.

My agency also collaborated with the Department of Education and University Hospital to provide in-person training for school safety specialists and to distribute more than 18,000 bleed-control kits to school districts throughout New Jersey.

Through unannounced active-shooter drills throughout the State, we can test and gauge the effectiveness of both plans and action of students, faculty, and staff in an environment that is controlled but realistic. We also continue to conduct large-scale active-shooter exercises for K–12 schools, ensuring that everyone, including schoolchildren, know what actions to take if they face emergency situations.

With that in mind, New Jersey colleges and universities participate in a quarterly Mass Gathering Working Group that is aimed at identifying and addressing those common vulnerabilities and filling any capability gaps at locations where students gather throughout the State.

We created a School Security subcommittee on the State's Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force, which I chair, to coordinate best practices across State agencies and relevant stakeholders and integrate with National priorities and local needs.

Last, my office and the New Jersey State Police, in coordination with county and local partners, conduct physical security assessments at schools as well as provide training to local law enforcement agencies to increase the capability to conduct assessments across the State.

One of the biggest safety and security challenges facing many educational institutions throughout New Jersey is funding. Legislation introduced by Chairman Payne, H.R. 6920, would provide dedicated Federal funding under current grant funding programs of at least $90 million every year that is earmarked strictly for school security.

This funding would greatly assist schools throughout the country, including New Jersey, adding resources that would enable schools to meet the very goals we have set out to achieve in the areas of prevention and response.

In conclusion, efforts such as the Mass Gathering Working Group, committee outreach initiatives, and the countless trainings and exercises our office conducts each year highlight that we will do all that is necessary to ensure the safety and security of the residents and visitors of New Jersey, protecting them from terrorist threats to our public spaces. We remain dedicated to continuing these efforts, to further collaborating with our partners, and to work toward addressing threats with a focus on prevention.

Chairman Payne, Ranking Member King, and distinguished Members of the subcommittee, I thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to your questions and yield back to the Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Maples follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JARED M. MAPLES

SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Payne and Ranking Member King, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

It is an honor to speak with you and share the work my office is doing to keep the residents and visitors of New Jersey safe, especially with regard to educational institutions.

The New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (NJOHSP) is tasked with coordinating counterterrorism, resiliency, and cybersecurity efforts across all levels of government, law enforcement, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector. NJOHSP is charged with bolstering New Jersey's resources for counterterrorism, critical infrastructure protection, preparedness, training, and Federal grants management.

New Jersey faces a complex, diverse, and fluid security environment with real, pervasive, and evolving threats. However, attacks against children and staff in what should be the safe haven of education is perhaps the most jarring threat we face. Recent incidents at schools in Parkland, Florida, and Santa Fe, Texas, serve as stark reminders that schools are often targeted by those seeking to commit acts of violence. Law enforcement in our own State of New Jersey—with the assistance of authorities in Delaware—prevented a potential school shooting this past June when they arrested a man possessing a loaded firearm and additional ammunition at an elementary school in Westfield.

The safety of our children and those charged with their care are paramount. We must do all that is necessary to provide students and staff with a sense of comfort and security in their learning environments, and parents and guardians deserve the peace of mind that their children will return to them at the end of the school day. For that reason, all State leaders are in sync on combining our resources to ensure the protection of our children.

NJOHSP ACTIONS

NJOHSP's work to protect our students would not be possible without the strong partnerships our Office has with the New Jersey Department of Education, New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, community members, and local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies.

Our office is proud of the collaborative progress we continue to make as a State in strengthening security throughout all our institutions, including in education. However, we recognize that our work is never complete, and continual improvement is the only way to succeed at protecting New Jersey and the country. While we provide details on our on-going efforts, be mindful that we always seek to improve our approach toward preventing these incidents from occurring in the first place.

A focus on prevention is key in stopping an incident before it starts and avoiding the need to employ response tactics. It is our goal to be first preventers instead of just first responders and make certain our communities embrace a culture of preparedness that invests equally in both practices.

Following the tragic shooting at a high school in Parkland, Florida, in February 2018, heightened awareness from citizens and law enforcement—combined with the New Jersey Attorney General Directive of March 26, 2018, that calls for local law enforcement agencies who receive tips about suspicious activity related to terrorism or threatened acts of violence, including toward schools, to immediately notify their County Counterterrorism Coordinator and our Office's Counterterrorism Watch Unit—led to an unprecedented increase in school-related reports to the New Jersey Suspicious Activity Reporting System.

As a result of this surge in school-related suspicious activity reports, our office analyzed these incidents last year and shared recommendations through an intelligence report that included input from the New Jersey Department of Education and the Regional Operations Intelligence Center, the State's fusion center. The report, distributed to school and police officials State-wide and briefed to hundreds of law enforcement and school security specialists, resulted in improvements to our reporting system to allow for more standardized and faster analysis and expeditious action to mitigate threats.

Additionally, our office, along with the FBI Newark Field Office, created high-level thresholds and notification protocols to ensure that all "threat to life" leads, particularly ones that involve schools, are immediately actioned to the appropriate municipal, county, State, and Federal law enforcement entities.

We will continue to prioritize the identification of suspicious activity, as well as ensure there is a clear path for reporting and addressing issues before an incident can occur.

We will expand innovative efforts through such measures as training school personnel—including administrators, faculty, school resource officers, Special Law Enforcement Officers, custodians, and bus drivers—and the community as a whole on how to recognize and report suspicious activity.

We will continue to work alongside the Department of Education to help school leadership address school threats and the importance of reporting suspicious activity with students and their parents and guardians.

We remain committed to a whole-of-government approach, working with other departments and agencies within the State administration to provide comprehensive active-shooter response training, including ways to spot pre-incident indicators and pathways to report those indicators.

Our partners in the New Jersey State Police, Department of Education, Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Department of Children and Families have achieved tremendous success as they built response capabilities that are second-to-none.

NJOHSP also collaborated with the Department of Education and University Hospital to provide in-person training for school safety specialists and to distribute more than 18,000 bleed control kits to school districts throughout the State.

Through unannounced active-shooter drills across the State, we can test and gauge the effectiveness of both plans and actions of faculty and staff in an environment that is controlled, but realistic. We also continue to conduct large-scale active-shooter exercises for K–12 schools.

Expanding security capabilities is an on-going focus, with particular attention paid to mass gatherings; understanding common vulnerabilities of these areas and events where large numbers of people gather; and ensuring that everyone, including schoolchildren, know what actions to take if they face emergency situations.

With that in mind, New Jersey colleges and universities participate in quarterly Mass Gathering Working Group meetings aimed at identifying and addressing those

common vulnerabilities and filling any capability gaps at locations where students gather throughout the State.

We want to not only make certain that we reinforce security measures of buildings, but also that those inside the buildings are empowered to safely respond to any incident. Training models and traditional planning assumptions must continue to expand in accordance with changing tactics and afford the capability to deviate from plans in the event of an unexpected scenario.

We created a School Security subcommittee on the State's Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force, which I chair, to coordinate best practices across State agencies and integrate with National priorities and local needs. Members of the subcommittee include the New Jersey Department of Education's Office of Student Support Services, University Hospital, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the FBI.

In 2018, with a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance STOP School Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training Program, the Department of Education and the New Jersey Department of Human Services Disaster and Terrorism Branch, in partnership with Sandy Hook Promise, facilitated training programs to schools across the State that focus on identifying warning signs of violence and taking action before an incident occurs.

Last, NJOHSP and the New Jersey State Police, in coordination with county and local partners, conduct physical security assessments at schools, as well as provide training to local law enforcement agencies to increase the capability to conduct assessments across the State.

NJOHSP is currently developing a methodology to conduct common vulnerability analyses from the physical school security assessment findings.

NJCCIC ACTIONS

The New Jersey Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Cell (NJCCIC), a component organization within NJOHSP, is charged with leading and coordinating New Jersey's cybersecurity efforts while building resiliency to cyber threats throughout the State.

In March 2019, the NJCCIC hosted a Cybersecurity Symposium for public-sector organizations, including those with limited cybersecurity resources, such as school systems and districts. The purpose of this conference was to provide attendees with practical strategies, tactics, resources, and tools to help manage cyber risk in their respective organizations and become more resilient to cyber attacks. One key takeaway from the symposium was hearing from IT administrators in school systems about lacking cybersecurity resources.

Over the past year, the NJCCIC has conducted 26 Cybersecurity Threat and Risk Mitigation Briefings for K–12 and higher education schools throughout New Jersey. In October, NJCCIC Director Michael Geraghty is providing a cybersecurity briefing at the annual New Jersey School Boards Association conference.

Over the past 2 years, the NJCCIC has received and/or responded to 166 cybersecurity incidents (38 in 2018 and 128 to date in 2019) affecting New Jersey K–12 schools and higher education institutions. The NJCCIC is continuously working to encourage institutions to report incidents so that we may identify patterns and trends, as well as provide risk mitigation strategies that would help the school community at large thwart emerging threats.

H.R. 6920, THE "SCHOOL SECURITY IS HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT ACT OF 2018"

One of the biggest safety and security challenges facing many educational institutions throughout New Jersey is funding. While the importance of enhancing security efforts and resources is shared by all, it is often difficult for schools to make the necessary financial commitment to provide both appropriate and effective safety measures for their facilities.

Legislation introduced by Chairman Payne—H.R. 6920, The "School Security is Homeland Security Grant Act of 2018"—would provide dedicated Federal funding under current grant funding programs of at least $90 million every year that is earmarked strictly for school security.

This funding would greatly assist schools throughout the country, including New Jersey, in enhancing the presence of security personnel at their facilities and in the acquisition of target-hardening equipment to secure those facilities.

This added resource would enable schools to meet the very goals we have set out to achieve in the areas of prevention and response. Through added security equipment, personnel, and trainings, schools would increase their preparedness level exponentially to confront threats.

CONCLUSION

While mass gathering events and areas provide numerous benefits to the public, such as fun, valuable learning experiences and a sense of community, we cannot overlook the need for safety and security in these areas. Those who wish to do harm at a heightened scale will continually target these types of locations. Schools, colleges, and universities are included in this trend and must remain a constant focus as we look to secure mass gathering facilities that also encompass amusement parks, arenas, casinos, and stadiums.

Efforts such as the Mass Gathering Working Group, community outreach initiatives, and the countless trainings and exercises our Office conducts each year highlight that we will do all that is necessary to ensure the safety and security of the residents and visitors throughout New Jersey, protecting them from terrorist threats to our public spaces.

We remain dedicated to continuing these efforts; to further collaborating with our law enforcement partners at the local, county, State, and Federal levels; and to work toward addressing threats with a focus on prevention.

Chairman Payne, Ranking Member King, and distinguished Members of the subcommittee, I thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

I look forward to your questions and yield back to the Chairman.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you for your testimony, sir.

I now recognize Ms. Martinez-Prather to summarize her statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF KATHY MARTINEZ-PRATHER, DIRECTOR, TEXAS SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER

Ms. MARTINEZ-PRATHER. Chairman Payne, Ranking Member King, and Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the topic of school safety and for your leadership in making school safety a priority and a critical part of the educational agenda for all of our schools across the country.

I am the director of the Texas School Safety Center at Texas State University, and I am here to discuss the efforts of the Center to support schools in effectively carrying out school safety mandates and best practices in Texas, the importance of prevention efforts in developing a comprehensive approach to school safety, and the impact that community violence also has in our schools.

As you are aware, every day, our schools face challenges that have the potential to impede the learning process for our students. And these challenges can range from human-caused acts of violence, to natural disasters, to more frequent safety issues that our schools deal with every single day.

The tragic events in Santa Fe, Texas, and Parkland, Florida, and countless others that have impacted our Nation's schools continue to remind us that we have a lot of work to do. We all need to continue to work and collaborate to ensure that our students have a safe place to learn and thrive.

The Texas School Safety Center was created in 1999 following the Columbine school shooting. The Center is tasked in the Texas Education Code and the Governor's Homeland Security Strategic Plan to serve as the central clearinghouse for the dissemination of school safety information, including training, research, and technical assistance for all K–12 districts, charter schools, and community colleges across the State.

The Center has a Governor-appointed board of directors that represent practitioners such as teachers and principals, superintendents, school board members, school-based law enforcement, and

parents, all who provide a diverse perspective to inform the work that we do.

Texas has approximately 1,025 school districts that include over 9,000 individual campuses, 700 charter schools, and 50 community colleges, all serving over 5.3 million students.

Texas schools are charged currently with several school safety mandates. Some of those include the adoption and implementation of a multi-hazard emergency operations plan; providing for employee training in responding to an emergency; conducting drills and exercises to prepare students and employees, including substitute teachers, for responding to an emergency; conducting an audit of all their district facilities once every 3 years; and establishing a school safety and security committee.

This last Texas legislative session, our State passed significant school safety mandates to further enhance the posture of safety in our Texas schools. Those mandates I will highlight:

School districts, charter schools, and community colleges must submit their multi-hazard emergency operation plans now for review and verification to the School Safety Center, with the opportunity for the Center to provide feedback and for the school district to make corrective action.

Each school district also must now establish a behavioral threat assessment team to serve each campus of the district.

Then a licensed architect will also be another school safety board member to inform and prioritize the critical role that school design plays to uphold the positive safe and learning environment.

Our commissioner of education has to also adopt facility standards for schools that provide for a safe and secure learning environment.

On May 18, 2018, Santa Fe High School was the target of a senseless attack, taking the lives of 10 people—8 students and 2 teachers. While the high school and school district as well as community continue to recover from this tragic event, the State of Texas also continues to make school safety a priority.

The Center knows that schools face many threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities, and, although an active attack is rare, the impact is no doubt catastrophic. That is why we take a comprehensive approach to school safety. We provide training, develop tools and resources for schools on how to prevent and/or mitigate, as well as respond to, and recover from, any type of threat or hazard that could arise.

School architecture and design is one of those key mitigation strategies. To be clear, this is not about installing cameras and metal detectors, although that may be appropriate for some schools. This is about designing schools to be learning spaces first, ones that contain minimally invasive but effective security measures. This best practice ensures that, whether a building is new or existing, its physical features do not negatively impact teachers, students, or the community at large.

The Center also stresses to schools the importance of prevention efforts in the overall comprehensive approach to school safety. As I mentioned earlier, Texas now requires school districts to have behavioral threat assessment teams. Responding to an active-shooter event or knowing what to do if an intruder enters the bills are

skills that students, teachers, and administrators unfortunately need to practice and perfect.

However, we know that educators are most interested in being preventative and proactive, not reactive. After a violent event occurs in our schools, educators, parents, community members, and legislators want to know what we could have done to have this event prevented.

Research of U.S. school shootings has shown that these events can be prevented because the acts are typically planned in advance, the actors tell others beforehand about their violent plans, and the acts are often carried out because there is a level of desperation or the view that violence is the only option left to solve problems.

Behavioral threat assessment provides a proactive, evidence-based approach for identifying individuals who may pose a threat to themselves or others, intervening with appropriate resources, and ultimately improving the safety and well-being of the individual of concern, the situation, and the school.

The goal of threat assessment is not to punish the child. It is not intended to be an adversarial process, but to connect them with the appropriate interventions they need so a threat can be averted.

Last, I want to bring attention to the impact that community violence has on schools. Most recently, on August 3, 2019, a gunman in El Paso, Texas, entered a Walmart and took the lives of 22 people, including a student from a nearby school district. Weeks later, on August 31, a gunman senselessly killed 7 people throughout the Midland-Odessa community, including a student from a nearby school district.

Although these were not school shootings, they had a significant impact on the school districts in those communities. As mentioned, 2 of those individuals killed were students, and many others either friends or family members and in some way connected to the school district.

In the aftermath that these acts of violence, many of the school districts in these communities were provided resources to assist with counseling for students, staff, and parents, which in some districts still continues today.

I want to finally communicate that school safety is a shared responsibility that involves school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers, mental health professionals, law enforcement, architects, State agencies and organizations, parents, students, and policy makers.

By ensuring that our schools are safe and healthy learning environments, we give our children the opportunity to excel academically, emotionally, and socially.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak today, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Martinez-Prather follows:]

STATEMENT OF KATHY MARTINEZ-PRATHER

SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

Chairman Payne, Ranking Member King, and Members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the topic of school safety and for your leadership in making school safety a priority and a critical part of the educational agenda for all our schools across the country. I am the director of the Texas

School Safety Center (TxSSC) at Texas State University, and I am here to discuss the efforts of the TxSSC to support schools in effectively carrying out school safety mandates and best practices in Texas, the importance of prevention efforts in developing a comprehensive approach to school safety, and the impact community acts of violence have on schools.

As you are aware, every day our schools face challenges that have the potential to impede the learning process for our students. These challenges can range from human-caused acts of violence or natural disasters to more frequent safety issues that educators confront daily. The tragic events in Santa Fe, TX and Parkland, FL, and countless others that have impacted our Nation's schools continue to remind us that we have a lot of work to do and we all need to continue to work and collaborate together to ensure that our students have a safe place to learn every day.

BACKGROUND OF TXSSC AND SCHOOL SAFETY MANDATES

The Texas School Safety Center at Texas State University, was created in 1999 following the tragic Columbine school shooting, and authorized by the Texas Legislature in 2001. The TxSSC is tasked in the Texas Education Code and the Governor's Homeland Security Strategic Plan to serve as the clearinghouse for the dissemination of school safety and security information, including training, research, and technical assistance for K–12 school districts, community colleges, and most recently—charter schools, in Texas. The Center has a Governor appointed board of directors that represent practitioners such as teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members, school-based law enforcement officers, and parents—who all provide a diverse perceptive to inform the work of the TxSSC.

As a research center, the TxSSC also engages in applied research that informs guidance for school practitioners about effective best practices in school safety. Our mission is to serve schools to create safe, secure, and healthy learning environments. Texas has approximately 1,025 school districts—that include over 9,000 individual campuses, 700 charter schools, and 50 community colleges—all serving over 5.3 million students.

Texas schools are charged with several school safety mandates that require:

- The adoption and implementation of a multi-hazard emergency operation plan
- Providing for employee training in responding to an emergency
- Conducting drills and exercises to prepare students and employees, including substitute teachers, for responding to an emergency
- Conducting an audit of their district facilities, at least once every 3 years, and submitting their audit data to the TxSSC
- Establishing a school safety and security committee.

This last Texas Legislative Session—our State passed significant school safety legislation to further enhance the posture of safety in our Texas schools. Three of those mandates I will highlight:

- School districts, charter schools, and community colleges must submit their Multi-hazard Emergency Operations Plan for review and verification to the TxSSC—with the opportunity for the TxSSC to provide feedback and for the school district to make corrective action.
- Each school district must establish a behavioral threat assessment team to serve each campus of the district.
- A licensed architect will be a TxSSC board member to inform and prioritize the critical role that school design plays to uphold a positive and safe learning environment.

Since its inception, the TxSSC has provided training and developed resources to stakeholders such as district and campus administrators, teachers, school counselors, school board members, and school-based law enforcement in areas such as emergency operations planning, multi-hazard response protocols, drilling and exercising, the school safety and security audit process, behavioral threat assessment, development of MOUs, youth preparedness, bullying prevention, suicide prevention, and internet safety, and specialized training to school-based law enforcement—just to name a few.

PREVENTION AND MITIGATION EFFORTS IN SCHOOL SAFETY

On May 18, 2018, Santa Fe High School, located in Santa Fe, TX was the target of a senseless active attack taking the lives of 10 people—8 students and 2 teachers. While the high school and school district, as well as the community continue to recover from this tragic event, the State of Texas also continues to make school safety a priority.

The TxSSC knows that schools face many threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities—and although an active attack is still rare—the impact is no doubt catastrophic.

That's why we take a comprehensive approach to school safety. We provide training and develop tools/resources for schools on how to prevent and/or mitigate as well as respond to and recover from, any type of threat that could arise.

School architecture and design is one of those key mitigation strategies. To be clear, this isn't about installing cameras and metal detectors, although that may be appropriate for some schools. This is about designing schools to be learning spaces first; ones that contain minimally invasive but effective security measures. This best practice ensures that whether a building is new or existing, its physical features don't negatively impact teachers, students, or the community at-large.

The TxSSC also stresses to schools the importance of prevention efforts in the overall comprehensive approach to school safety. Modeled after the State of Virginia legislation, Texas now requires school districts to have behavioral threat assessment teams. Responding to an active-shooter event or knowing what to do if an intruder enters the building are skills students, teachers, and administrators unfortunately need to practice and perfect. However, we know that educators are most interested in being preventative and proactive, not reactive. After a violent event occurs in our schools, educators, parents, community members, and legislators want to know how it could have been prevented.

Research of U.S. school shootings has shown that these violent events can be prevented because the acts are typically planned in advance, the actors tell others beforehand about their violent plans, and the acts are often carried out because there is a level of desperation or the view that violence is the only option left to solve problems.

Behavioral threat assessment provides a proactive, evidence-based approach for identifying individuals who may pose a threat to self or others, intervening with appropriate resources, and ultimately improving the safety and well-being of the individual of concern, the situation, and the school.

The goal of threat assessment is not to punish a child, but to connect them with the appropriate interventions they need so a threat can be averted and that individual can be put on a path to success. Keeping our schools safe involves not just effectively responding to violent events, but working to prevent them as well. Behavioral threat assessment management is a means to do just that.

IMPACT OF COMMUNITY VIOLENCE ON SCHOOLS

Community acts of violence also have a significant impact on schools. Most recently, on August 3, 2019, a gunman in El Paso, TX entered a Walmart and took the lives of 22 people, including a student from a nearby school district. Weeks later on August 31, a gunman senselessly killed 7 people throughout the Midland/Odessa community, including a student from a nearby school district. On November 5, 2017, a gunman fatally shot and killed 26 people at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, TX.

Although these were not school shootings, they had a significant impact on the school districts in those communities. As mentioned, 2 of the individuals killed were students and many others either friends or family members of those in the school district. In the aftermath of these acts of violence, many of the school districts in these communities were also provided resources to assist with counseling for students, staff, and parents, which in some cases still continues today. It is important to understand that these acts of violence in the community also impact schools. I have spoken with several of the superintendents in these communities, who also knew I would be here today, and what is paramount throughout these discussions is the desire to engage in preventative strategies—specifically through the threat assessment process—to avert acts of violence before they ever occur, whether in our schools or in our communities.

School safety is a shared responsibility that involves school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers, mental health professionals, law enforcement, architects, school safety professionals, various State agencies/organizations, parents, students, policy makers, and the entire community. By ensuring that our schools are safe and healthy learning environments, we give our children the opportunity to excel both academically and socially.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and I look forward answering any questions you may have.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you for your testimony.

I now recognize Mr. Schachter to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MAX SCHACHTER, FOUNDER AND CEO, SAFE SCHOOLS FOR ALEX

Mr. SCHACHTER. My name is Max Schachter. My son Alex was one of 17 people that were brutally murdered at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School last year. After I buried my son, my priority was to make sure that my other 3 children were safe in their schools.

I have spent the past year advocating for National school safety best practices that can be recognized at the Federal level and housed a school safety website and made available to all schools. My goal is to make it as easy as possible for schools to be as safe as possible.

I am pleased to see the President's Federal Commission on School Safety report recommend development of this clearinghouse, and the Department of Homeland Security, along with other Federal agencies, have been working extremely hard to implement this recommendation.

I recently reviewed a demonstration of the DHS new school safety clearinghouse website. It is schoolsafety.gov. I was extremely impressed as well. I hope once the website is launched there will be an aggressive outreach campaign to schools and school districts so they take advantage of this information as quickly as possible.

Two areas that this committee can have the most impact are in the areas of grants and emergency communications.

With regard to grants, grants can be used so—I understand that FEMA preparedness grants can be used today by local jurisdictions to support school safety enhancements. I recommend this committee consider ways to ensure FEMA grant dollars that are used for school safety are used to implement the best practices identified on the DHS school safety clearinghouse website and that they should be used on the most basic safety enhancements before anything else. Expensive technology upgrades should take a back seat to common-sense measures that enhance security.

With regard to emergency communications, in Parkland, the first-responder radios failed and were not interoperable, delaying help for victims who were dying on the third floor, waiting for medical attention. SWAT teams had to resort to using hand signals to avoid shooting each other because their radios failed.

The 9/11 Commission report highlighted this problem at the Pentagon and at Ground Zero, and nearly 20 years later the same problem plagued our first responders at my son's school. This is not acceptable, and it has to stop.

Congress can't force all first-responder agencies to use a single radio system, but you can incentivize agencies to become instantly interoperable as soon as an incident happens regardless of what radio system you are using.

In addition to grants and communications improvements, I recommend Congress pass the EAGLES Act to reauthorize the U.S. Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center so that they can expand the reach to help States develop threat assessment programs. These programs can identify students that exhibit concerning behavior and get them the help they need before they commit acts of targeted violence.

I also support the TAPS Act, which would result in a DHS-led process to develop threat assessment capabilities at the broadest level across the United States. The Secret Service uses threat assessment teams to protect the President. The Capitol Hill police use threat assessment teams to protect you in Congress. Our children deserve the same protection.

In my view, the reason school shootings have been an epidemic for the last two decades is, No. 1, parents and community members have a mindset that it can't happen here. That false sense of security is partly due to the fact that schools are not being honest with the public about violence on their campus.

Additionally, schools are not successfully establishing a positive culture and climate, as in many cases result in bullying, which can lead to school mass murder. We need to do a better job of teaching kids the tools to deal with their anger, rejection, and failure later in life.

Florida has implemented laws to gain school district compliance, but I believe the most effective strategy to doing this is public pressure to make school districts prioritize safety and security.

Unfortunately, there is no school safety rating system that currently exists to tell parents whether or not their school is safe. When parents go on-line to look at ratings of K through 12, many of them have an A rating. They don't realize that that is just academics. Academics are important, but if the children do not come home from their school every day, nothing else matters.

The car industry's crash test rating has improved car safety and decreased fatalities, but for parents, there is no way to know if their child's school is safe. I believe a school safety rating system would influence change Nation-wide.

It has been 20 years since Columbine, and children continue to be murdered in their classroom. Unfortunately, we know that the next school mass murderer is already out there. It is not a question of if; it is a question of when. We know what can be done to prevent it, and we know what must be done to mitigate the risk of more lives lost.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Schachter follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MAX SCHACHTER

9/26/19

My name is Max Schachter, my son Alex was one of 17 people that were brutally murdered at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School last year. After I buried my son my priority was to make sure my other 3 children were safe in their schools. I could not afford to lose another child. I said to law enforcement and school officials show me the best practices, show me the school safety standards and they all told me there were none. I couldn't understand how that was possible. We developed fire codes after 92 children died in a school fire in 1958 and it has worked. No child has died in a school fire in 60 years. It has been 20 years since Columbine and children and teachers continue to be murdered in their classrooms.

I traveled the country and came to realize that in all of the 139,000 K–12 schools, each principal had to become a school security expert. It made no sense to me that each school had to reinvent the wheel. The idea that crystalized for me was the need to create National School Safety Best Practices at the Federal level. Those best practices would be housed on a clearinghouse website so that all schools had a repository to find the most effective ways to secure their school.

I was pleased to see this idea highlighted in President Trump's Federal Commission on School Safety report and the subsequent development of the clearinghouse

in DHS. I received an in-depth demo of their new website SchoolSafety.gov several days ago and I was very impressed. DHS hopes to have it live by the end of October. Once the website has been launched there needs to be a huge outreach to schools and school districts.

Once we have the best practices, we need to make sure that all Federal grant dollars are being used to implement the newly-developed best practices. For example, Broward County received $500,000 from COPS for analytic cameras when they did not even have an active assailant response policy. They were not training their teachers and staff what to do in a school shooting. They did not identify safer corner of the classrooms. They didn't have coverings for the windows to obscure the sight line of the shooter. In order to move the needle, we have to make sure schools are not just throwing money at the problem (analytic cameras) but they're doing things in a systematic planned approach.

Unfortunately, we know we can't prevent 100 percent of these school mass murders. But we know that we can absolutely mitigate a lot of risk to students, teachers, and staff when they do happen. Every school can do things TODAY to improve school safety. Many of those things are low-cost or no-cost. Those measures will be on SchoolSafety.gov. Things like developing a formal active assailant response policy, training your teachers and students what to do in an emergency, train all staff to lock doors, identify the safer corners in the classroom, If you have an app for students to report threats advertise it, train your students how to use it, make sure all teachers have the ability to block the sightline of the window, make sure law enforcement has live real-time access to school cameras during emergencies.

Other measures I support are implementing Stop The Bleed kits in all classrooms and offices. That way your teachers and staff can be first responders. SWAT will not arrive for over 30 minutes. if you do not stop an arterial bleed within 5 minutes your chance of survival is minute.

Given the fact that most school shootings take place in 4–5 minutes, immediate notification to law enforcement and the entire school campus is paramount. The process in most K–12 schools takes way to long and people die due to the time lapse.

One of best ways to prevent the next school shooting are threat assessment teams. After the VA Tech shooting the State of Virginia implemented the threat assessment program developed by the USSS National Threat Assessment Center. As a result, they have not had a school shooting since. I recommend all members to cosponsor and pass the EAGLES Act. It reauthorizes the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center so they will be able to expand their reach in order to help other States develop threat assessment programs to identify students that exhibit concerning behavior and to get them the help they need before they commit acts of targeted violence. I support the TAPS Act as well. The U.S. Secret Service uses threat assessments to protect the President. The Capitol Hill Police uses threat assessment teams to protect Congress. Our children deserve the same protection. Pass the EAGLES Act!

In my view the main reason school shootings have been an epidemic for the past 2 decades is two-fold. No. 1, parents and community members have an "it can't happen here" mindset. That mindset lets complacency set in and prevents them from having a security mindset. Schools are not being honest about the violence on their campus and there is no way for parents to know if their child's school is safe. No. 2, schools are not successfully establishing a positive culture and climate on their campus which results in bullying. Kids are not being given enough tools to function after they graduate to deal with their anger, rejection, failure, and crisis they will no question experience.

A prime example of the underreporting of campus violence can be seen in in what Marjory Stoneman Douglas reported to the State for the years 2014–2017. They reported No bullying, No harassment, and ZERO Threat/Intimidation. We all know those numbers are bogus and far from true. It's not just Broward County that is inaccurately reporting these incidents. This is pervasive across the entire country. The result is a false sense of security which leads to complacency in implementing school safety best practices. School districts around the country must ensure that each school accurately report all required incidents and that under-reporting is eliminated. Unfortunately, there IS AN incentive to underreport so the numbers look good.

On college campuses, the Federal Cleary Act imposes large financial penalties for inaccurate reporting of campus crime statistics. In K–12 there is such no requirement. When the public goes on-line to look at the ratings of K–12 many of them, including MSD, have an 'A' rating. The public does not understand that has nothing to do with the safety of that institution. That is just academics. Academics are important, but if children do not come home from school every day NOTHING else matters. There is no school safety rating system currently to inform parents and

teachers whether or not their school has implemented best practices to prevent and mitigate casualties during the next school attack. Florida has implemented laws to gain school district compliance, but I believe the most effective strategy is to use public pressure to make school districts prioritize safety and security. I believe we need a school safety rating system. The car industry's crash test rating system has improved car safety and decreased fatalities. But for parents there is nothing. No way to know if your child's school is safe or not.

Broward County Public School pre-arrest diversionary program known as PROMISE created a culture of leniency within its schools. This prevented the judicial system from having an opportunity to address the murderer's systematic violent behavior and resulted in him never being arrested. He was able to accumulate 55 instances of disciplinary action. Everyone is in favor of giving kids a "second chance" but not 55 of them. This disciplinary system prioritized the rights of the murderer over the rights of every other child in his classes and schools that he tormented, assaulted, and threatened. There were 69 documented incidents where the murderer threaten someone, engaged in violence, talked about guns or other weapons. It was no surprise to anyone on campus that he had committed this horrible act of violence. He had been violent since age 3. There were an additional 43 instances of law enforcement interaction with him outside of school. He was never arrested. He had all the red flags of a future school mass murderer. He was suicidal, homicidal, killed animals, mutilated their bodies, obsessed with weapons, and when he turned 18 his mother bought him a gun.

Broward County public schools used FERPA to not share information and data with law enforcement. Their refusal to let law enforcement have access to school cameras prevented law enforcement from having live actionable intelligence inside the building. They waited 11 minutes to enter the building. Upon arriving law enforcement thought the murderer was still inside. They did not go up to the third floor for over 40 minutes to administer medical attention to the 10 kids that had been shot and were dying. They had no idea the murderer had escaped after 6 minutes.

There must be a conversation with the law enforcement about active-shooter training. Broward Sheriff Office Active Shooter policy on 2/14/18 was that officers MAY go toward the shooter as opposed to SHALL go toward the shooter. During the interviews of BSO deputies some could not remember if their last active-shooter training was 10 years ago or 20 years ago. That is probably because their training frequency was only every 3 years. The SRO on campus Deputy Peterson underwent a single, 1-hour active-shooter exercise in the 3 years leading up to the mass shooting. They only had 5 trainers for a force of over 5k officers. The SRO on campus arrived at the front of the building in 1 min 44 seconds. By then 24 people had been shot and or killed on the first floor. After arriving to the front of the building the SRO heard the gun fire. He then went and hid behind a concrete pillar for 48 minutes. He never entered the building. Active-shooter training builds muscle memory. Unfortunately, during a mass casualty event people do not rise to the occasion. they fall to their lowest level of training. The other responding agency, Coral Springs Police Department, conducts active-shooter training every year. Those officer in contrast went right into the building. Eight Sheriff deputies heard gunshots and did not attempt to enter the building. They are either under investigation, reassigned, or retired. [sic] no active bulletproof vest wear policy

After Columbine, all responding officers were required to rapidly deploy directly to the threat. Yet in Parkland, 8 deputies waited outside for 11 minutes while kids and staff were being slaughtered. In Parkland, first responder radios failed and were not interoperable, delaying help for victims. SWAT teams had to resort to hand signals to avoid shooting each other because their radios failed. Yet as a country we haven't truly committed to solving the communications problems. We can't force all agencies to use a single radio system, but we CAN make it possible for them to communicate no matter what system they are using. After Sandy Hook each school should have trained their students and staff how to respond to active shooters. Sadly, many did not. During the 2017–2018 school year, Marjory Stoneman Douglas did not hold a single code red drill. Students and staff did not know what to do when the murderer fired his AR–15 into classrooms and killing their classmates. No staff member called a code red until 3 minutes after the shooting had started. By then all 17 people were dead, including my little Alex.

It has been 20 years since the Columbine massacre and children continue to be murdered in their classrooms. We know the next school mass murderer is already out there. The gun that he will use is already out there. It is not a question of IF, it is a question of WHEN. We know what can be done to prevent it, and we know what MUST be done to mitigate the risk of more lives lost.

ATTACHMENT.—SCHOOL SAFETY MEASURES IMPLEMENTED IN FLORIDA POST THE MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL MASSACRE

*Majority of measures were recommended by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission after their 14-month investigation into the 2/14/18 massacre. Their recommendations were subsequently signed into law by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis.

*All measures are completed except for ones marked

GUN SAFETY

- Created a legal process (Risk Protection Orders) that requires people meeting certain criteria (threatened self-harm or harm toward others) to surrender their firearms and prohibits them from purchasing firearms.
- Prohibits gun purchases by anyone under age 21 and requires a 3-day waiting period for all gun purchases.
- Authorizes law enforcement officers to seize firearms when taking someone into custody under the Baker Act for threatened harm toward another person.

GUARDIAN PROGRAM

- Created the Guardian Program and required that there be an armed Safe School Officer (armed person) on every school campus.
- The legislature should expand the Guardian Program to include all school personnel.
- Law enforcement and guardian staffing should be sufficient on each charter, elementary, middle, and high school campus to provide immediate back-up and appropriate and timely response to an active assailant situation. (Pending. Most schools have one or two SROs or guardians, but most school districts still prohibit any school staff from participating in the guardian program.)

MENTAL HEALTH

- Expanded mental health Community Action Teams to focus on people up to age 21 who have a history of criminal justice and law enforcement involvement.
- Expanded multi-agency network of mental health services in K–12 schools.
- Expanded mental health Mobile Response Teams focusing on people up to age 25 who are in crisis and need intensive case management until they are placed into services.
- At registration, every student is required to disclose any prior mental health referrals and schools are permitted to refer students for mental health services.
- Courts are required to report to the school superintendent any child they refer to mental health services.
- Mandated that mental health professionals report and warn others of impending threats by their patients.
- School mental health records must be placed in the student record and follow the student when he/she transfers from school to school and inter-district. Records are now required to be transferred within 3 days and if a student is under care of a Threat Assessment Team the transferring team is responsible to ensure continuity of services until the receiving school's team evaluates the student.
- Students referred for mental health services must commence treatment within 45 days. School-based treatment must begin within 15 days and community treatment within 30 days.
- Consider targeted mental health case management for people in 13 to 25 age range.
- School districts should coordinate mental health services with community providers. (Pending, but law now permits referrals by school providers to community-based providers).

PREVENTION

- Created FortifyFL app as a mobile suspicious activity reporting tool and requires that all Florida schools promote the app.
- Every school in the State is required to have a Behavioral Threat Assessment Team. The team is required to have certain members, including a law enforcement officer.
- FLDOE will provide all districts a standardized behavioral threat assessment instrument and develop an on-line threat assessment database.
- Required the development of an Integrated Data Repository and Social Media Monitoring tool.

- Makes it a felony to threaten to kill someone without the previous "transmission" requirement.

SCHOOL HARDENING

- Every classroom must have a designated safe area or hard corner.
- Require that all gates to school campuses are closed and locked. When open the gates must be staffed. (Pending. Survey shows compliance in 59/67 districts.)
- All campuses should have single ingress and egress points. (Pending)
- Each classroom door should have an immediately available opaque covering to block the line of sight from the outside. (Pending)
- Every school should have a policy requiring that classroom doors be locked when occupied.
- All law enforcement agencies in Broward County should have live, real-time access to cameras in all Broward County schools. (Pending. BSO has access and access is pending by other agencies.)
- Every school must have an effective communication system through which all personnel may transmit and receive threat notifications. (Pending. Survey shows some compliance but still pending in many schools).
- Required annual physical site security assessment of every school in the State, and report to DOE using the Florida Safe School Assessment Tool (FSSAT). In addition to the school specific assessment and report, a separate district-wide report is required annually.
- Established School Hardening and Harm Mitigation Workgroup. The workgroup must be comprised of school security subject-matter experts and the workgroup must submit a report with recommendations to DOE by August 1, 2020.

TRAINING/DRILLS

- Every school must conduct monthly active assailant drills.
- Every school district and charter school must adopt an active-shooter response plan and all school personnel must be trained on the plan.
- All school active assailant policies must make clear that all staff are empowered to initiate an active-shooter response.

DISCIPLINE POLICY/DIVERSION PROGRAM

- School district "zero tolerance" policies cannot apply to petty acts, except acts of violence, but when a student commits more than one misdemeanor the Threat Assessment Team must consult with law enforcement to determine if the act should be "reported" to law enforcement.
- Include school diversion programs under the same auspices as community juvenile diversion programs. (Not completed but DJJ report just issued.)

BROWARD SHERIFF'S OFFICE

- BSO should change its active assailant response policy from "may" to "shall," requiring that deputies enter an active-shooter situation to stop the threat.
- BSO should increase the frequency and quality of its active assailant response training.

RADIO/COMMUNICATIONS/9–1–1

- Law enforcement agencies throughout Florida should be required to have radio interoperability in each county and with surrounding jurisdictions.
- Police agencies should be required to share primary patrol radio channels with other agencies.
- All 9–1–1 centers should have direct radio communication with all first responder agencies in their service area.

BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (BCPS)

- BCPS should conduct an internal investigation into the actions and inactions of AP Jeff Morford (mishandling of the Cruz threat assessment), Principal Ty Thompson and others. (Pending).
- Require that all school personnel report suspicious incidents to a school administrator, that the incidents be tracked, and their disposition documented.
- BCPS should evaluate its threat assessment process.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- Every school district is required to have a School Safety Specialist to oversee school safety in the district.
- Created the Office of Safe School (OSS) within the Department of Education (DOE). OSS is responsible for compliance and oversight of all school safety and security matters throughout the State.
- Establish a workgroup to recommend FERPA changes. (Pending. The DOE analysis was just completed.)
- Require mandatory use of the Florida Safe School Assessment Tool (FSSAT) by all districts and schools.
- Authorizes the FLDOE commissioner to oversee and require compliance with all Florida school safety laws including completion and submission of the FSSAT.
- FL DOE commissioner and State BOE now has sanction authority to ensure compliance with all mandated school safety requirements.
- CJSTC should require single officer response training. CJSTC has not acted on this but FDLE has created the training. (Pending.)

Mr. PAYNE. I would like to thank all the witnesses for their testimony.

I will remind each Member that he or she will have 5 minutes to question the panel.

I will now recognize myself for questions.

Ms. Hogg, I want to take a minute before I ask my question to show a video that March for our Lives put out about active-shooter drills in schools and the reality of what kids are going through today. For context, this is a real student and was not scripted.

So let us play the video, please.

[Video shown.]

Mr. PAYNE. Ms. Hogg, can you tell the subcommittee what goes through your mind when you see this video? What should Congress be doing to help ensure kids are safe in schools, rather than putting the responsibility on kids to become experts in active-shooter situations?

Ms. HOGG. So I was grateful enough to be able to be part of the creation team on this video. I remember, when I first saw it, the first thing that came to mind is myself. I saw myself in that little girl that was giving that training because that was me; that has been me my whole life. As I said, I was born after Columbine, and we learned those little rhymes, nursery rhyme things, that are supposed to teach you how to try and survive when somebody comes into your school to murder you.

Additionally, I think there are many things that can be done that I addressed in my testimony. But I think, of course, I will always say this: The first step, although it may be difficult, is to address the gun violence epidemic.

Additionally, like I said, we must invest money into school mental health resources. We cannot just say again or hear again, from my perspective, Members of Congress say that they are going to do something about mental health—because I completely agree with that—but then do absolutely nothing.

I have seen what it is like. I am still in school. I think for many people, many legislators, like yourselves, school is different these days, probably, than when you went to school. There are so many extended pressures, extra pressures, that we deal with every single day. So I really would push mental health. I think you need to have those conversations with mental health professionals themselves to see what works best.

Yes, I think, like I said, with that video, all I saw was myself growing up, because that was me, and that still is me, and it will probably forever be me, because that is what I was taught as I was learning my ABCs.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Mr. King.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me thank all the witnesses, especially Ms. Hogg and Mr. Schachter, for being here today and trying to make something positive out of something so horrible. So I want to thank you for that.

Director Maples, let me lead off with you. First of all, thank you for your work on homeland security from a neighboring State. I know the work you are doing, and I am very appreciative of that.

Mr. MAPLES. Thank you.

Mr. KING. You mentioned training programs from grants. Do you think those programs are successful in preventing violence? Are schools implementing them?

Mr. MAPLES. So the training programs that we have existing in New Jersey, one of the biggest focus areas for us is on that preventive part. So we are really focusing on everything from bus drivers, to custodians, to teachers, to students, as far as if a classmate is demonstrating or a person they know in the community is demonstrating behavioral indicators, that they should report that.

So part of training becomes, No. 1, recognizing what those behaviors are and, No. 2, where to go with the information in a way that maintains everyone's rights but allows us to look into it and work with mental health professionals, the school district, the law enforcement part, et cetera.

So, from that perspective, we are implementing those across the State——

Mr. KING. Do you find the school districts are taking it seriously?

Mr. MAPLES. We do. In New Jersey, we definitely have—I am sure there are some outliers. There definitely are outliers. But we continually work with them and with the Department of Education to make sure that that training gets out there and they are taking it seriously.

Mr. KING. Mr. Schachter, along those lines—again, thank you for your testimony. You basically discussed the lack of concern that too many school districts have had. You have spoken all over the country now. Do you find that the concern is increasing? Is there still an apathy in certain districts, thinking it is never going to hit them?

Mr. SCHACHTER. It depends. If you have had a school shooting in your community, you are hyper-vigilant, but many schools districts around this country still think it is not going to happen to them.

You know, there is no way for parents to know whether or not your school is safe. There are so many things that we can do today that are low-cost, no-cost that have been implemented in Florida.

Just to give you an example, in Broward County, which is the sixth-largest school district in the country, we didn't even have a formal active assailant response policy. Marjory Stoneman Douglas did not conduct a Code Red drill for several years prior to the shooting. So they didn't train their teachers, they didn't train their staff what to do in an emergency. If, God forbid, an active shooter

walks on your campus, what is happening—what happened at Marjory Stoneman Douglas is a lot of dead people. That needs to change.

So, you know, in Florida, we have mandated—we have come to the realization that schools are not going to do the right thing. They have failed to protect our children. In Florida, we have mandated that schools implement drills. We have mandated every one of them has to have an active assailant response policy. They all have to train.

Training in a lockdown, which is what many schools are doing, is just teaching the next school shooter exactly where to go. We need to be training them and giving them options-based training so that they have lots of different options if, God forbid, something happens.

So, extremely happy that we have the school safety website coming live, but we need more schools to be able to access that information and make their schools safe. There is still a lot of apathy in this country.

Mr. KING. Is there any resistance, or is it just apathy?

Mr. SCHACHTER. You know, I think——

Mr. KING. A lot of people don't want to hear about it. I remember, like, for instance, when the heroin epidemic was starting, many schools didn't want to admit that there was a heroin epidemic. They didn't want to admit it was in their district. They were afraid of what was going to happen in the next school budget or what the rating of the school would be. Do you find any resistance like that when it comes to gun safety?

Mr. SCHACHTER. You know, there is a culture to underreport violence on campus. Just to give you an example, in Broward County, at Marjory Stoneman Douglas, between 2014 to 2017, they reported zero assaults, zero threats, zero intimidation. These are all not true and lies.

So we need accurate reporting of violence on campus. Bullying can lead to mass murder. We need to be able to know what is happening on our campus so we can help the children, we can reduce violence on campus. That will make all children safe, that will make communities safe.

It is a cooperative effort, so it is working with law enforcement inside the community, inside the schools.

Mr. KING. Thank you for your dedication and for your eloquence.

Mr. SCHACHTER. Thank you.

Mr. KING. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

I now recognize the gentleman from New York, Mr. Rose.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Hogg, thank you for showing the courage to come here today.

Do you think we have done enough, Congress?

Ms. HOGG. I mean, I think if you would have done enough, we wouldn't have to be having this conversation today, right? Just to be frank with you.

I think if we did enough, I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't have lost my friends. Lots of people back in my community in Florida would not have lost their children or their loved ones. I think there is much more that needs to be done.

I appreciate, as I stated in my testimony, you allowing me to be here today, because that is the first step, but I think there is a myriad of things that we need to work on, like I said.

I believe part of school safety is implementing proactive measures that include things like gun violence prevention. And that something that is so often is not wanted to be something that is talked about.

But I think we need to remember, I think one of the greatest things you all can do as Congressmen and -women is continue to have young people who are being affected by this be at the forefront of these conversations.

Mr. ROSE. I want to get a sense of what you and your friends who went through this horrific crisis think about us in Washington, DC.

If Parkland happened tomorrow, again——

Ms. HOGG. It might, at a different school.

Mr. ROSE. It might.

Ms. HOGG. Yes.

Mr. ROSE [continuing]. If Sandy Hook happened again tomorrow somewhere else, do you think we would act?

Ms. HOGG. With regards to school safety?

Mr. ROSE. And gun control.

Ms. HOGG. I hope one day you will.

Unfortunately, if that takes until people my age are in your position, to have grown up learning school safety procedures and losing loved ones to gun violence. If you guys don't act, eventually I know things will happen. Because people my age, who have been continuously traumatized by instances of gun violence, whether that be with in regards to in-school or out-of-school gun violence, and especially communities of color, we are going to be the legislators, sitting in your seats. We are going to be the ones who have lived through this. We will have to make these changes.

Trying to imagine a world where school shootings aren't a thing that happened to myself is like trying to describe a color to a blind man. I mean, this has been my normal my whole life. It is unfortunate, but it has.

I mean, I think if Sandy Hook or Stoneman Douglas happened tomorrow, I am not sure if many of Congressmen, Congresswomen today would do anything unless it was their own child or their own loved one who was taken to gun violence.

Mr. ROSE. Ms. Hogg, I don't think you and your friends at this point have any reason to trust us.

I think—I share your sentiments. I don't know how much more blood has to be spilled in this country, I don't know how many more children have to be afraid to go to school, I don't know how many more parents have to hug their kids before they go to school, fearing that they are not going to come home, before we do something.

This is as sad as it gets. You are right; it may have to come to you and your friends replacing us up here before we actually act.

Ms. Hogg, as you think about your teachers that you have had, do you think that they are capable during another Parkland of discharging a weapon in your defense?

Ms. HOGG. I think it is not their responsibility.

I come from a family of teachers. I think when they went to college, when they went to school to become an educator, they weren't thinking that part of their job was going to have to be a security officer.

So, like I stated in my testimony once before, we had an armed officer at my school, and when it came to that moment of fight or flight, he went away.

So the idea that teachers having guns would solve this issue is the same idea as giving another person a gun to solve gun violence is the issue, if you know what I am saying.

When we hear those things, like, two guns will protect the majority of people from one bad guy with a gun, that is kind of just sounding like we are trying to turn every single individual, or in this case every single teacher, into an armed vigilante. That is something that no teacher should have to be.

Also, I just cannot imagine, if teachers were armed, the amount of incidents that would take place, that would be them killing a student who didn't happen to be the perpetrator of the violence. I think there would just be more violence coming out of that if teachers were armed.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you, Ms. Hogg, for your testimony, and thank you for your leadership. I wish there were more folks around here like you.

Ms. HOGG. Thank you.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

I now recognize the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Joyce.

Oh, I am sorry. He is gone.

I recognize the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Crenshaw.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, everyone, for being here.

Mr. Schachter, thank you for being here. You are doing a great justice to your son's memory——

Mr. SCHACHTER. Thank you.

Mr. CRENSHAW [continuing]. By looking for the right solutions to this.

You answered a lot of my questions because your testimony was so exact. You mentioned the National best practices clearinghouse and the *schoolsafety.gov* being a great first step. But you said that there is going to be an issue with how well we get that information out to schools. Do you have any recommendations on the best way to do that?

I would like Ms. Martinez-Prather to also answer that question. What is the next step—after Mr. Maples as well—what is the next step after what are deemed to be pretty good next steps or pretty good solutions already?

Mr. SCHACHTER. The first thing that we are lacking is—you know, at the end of October, that website is going to go live. So, you know, there are going to be a lot of great resources on that website. It is very interactive, so schools will be able to go on there, answer a series of questions to see where they are in the process of making their school safe. Then that website will walk you through the process, it will tell you where your gaps are, where your deficiencies are. Then it will actually direct you to grant dollars.

To give you an example, one of the deficiencies that we have currently is that a lot of our grant programs, they are not implementing best practices. So what I would like to see is that, once we have these best practices, once the website goes live, tie those best practices to the grant dollars.

We want to make sure that schools are implementing the most effective measures to make schools safe. We don't want schools implementing just some shiny object that is not really going to have an impact.

Mr. CRENSHAW. So the issue isn't necessarily that there is not enough grants or not the right grants; the issue is that we are not tying that grant money to the right basic practices.

You mentioned this, too, about what are the basic measures, not the fancy bells and whistles, but what are the basic measures. Can you answer that as well?

That is the next question I have for you both, as well.

Thank you.

Mr. SCHACHTER. So, as far as low-cost, no-cost measures, for instance, just having a formal active assailant response policy. I mean, to think that the sixth-largest school in the country didn't have it, I am sure there are a lot of other schools around this country that don't have a simple policy.

You know, to train your teachers and staff. These are low-cost measures. Training your staff to lock your doors, to teach with a locked door; identifying a safer corner in the classroom that children know where to go in an emergency.

Then it is encouraging students to report violent threats. Kids know, you know, who put something on Snapchat or Instagram. We need to encourage them, see something, say something, but, more importantly, do something with that information that they know about.

Then one of the problems at Marjory Stoneman Douglas is, law enforcement that responded did not have access to live, actionable intelligence. The school district used FERPA to not share cameras with law enforcement. So when they came on-scene, they didn't know where the shooter was. It took them 11 minutes to get into the first floor and 40 minutes to get to the third floor to administer medical attention to the 10 kids that were shot and dying on the third floor.

You know, as far as getting the word out, we need to work with every State school safety center to get that information out and populated as broadly as possible.

Mr. CRENSHAW. OK. We have one of those right here.

Ms. Martinez-Prather, could you expand on that? Also tell us about the threat behavioral assessments that Texas uses. Are there any metrics or any successes there we could speak of?

Ms. MARTINEZ-PRATHER. Yes, sir.

Well, regarding the Federal clearinghouse, what is great about that is it is an interagency effort. So, oftentimes, from a State perspective, you have multiple agencies working on this effort in good faith, saying different things, and that confuses school districts. Our role at the State level is to bring all that together, synthesize it, incorporate Texas considerations—because we have pretty com-

prehensive mandates for schools to follow—and push that back out to school districts.

So I think that it is great that all of the agencies are working together on this effort. I think that is going to help with clear lines of communication and guidance.

Texas really took a page from the State of Virginia in passing its behavioral threat assessment legislation this session with this idea of prevention really needing to have a focus. It is part of that comprehensive piece.

In the Center, we focus on mitigation prevention primarily. The idea here is, we are creating a culture of situational awareness where students trust adults, they know they can go to somebody, they know they are not snitching on another peer. Because we know that they have that intel, they have that information to share, and most oftentimes they don't, for various reasons.

But knowing that they are able to report that information, knowing that that individual is going to get help. We always stress that it is not intended to be a means of engaging in exclusionary discipline.

In Texas, there are going to be several pieces of data that will have to be collected and which our State education agency will be overseeing in terms of who is on that behavioral threat assessment team, because the big focus here is that it has to be multidisciplinary. It is not just the school principal. It is not just the school counselor. You have your campus administration, a law enforcement officer, a mental health professional, a teacher. Depending on the situation, it is fluid. You may bring in an ad hoc member that has a close relationship with the students.

The idea here is that it captures pre-incident indicators or alarming behaviors that may not just be leading to an act of violence. It——

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

Ms. MARTINEZ-PRATHER. Can be a student who is, you know, threatening harm to themselves. It may be behaviors have changed that show there may be a substance abuse problem. Maybe there is trauma experienced at home. So how can we——

Mr. PAYNE. Please wrap up your answer, please.

Ms. MARTINEZ-PRATHER. I am sorry? Oh, yes.

Mr. PAYNE. No, you can finish your answer.

Ms. MARTINEZ-PRATHER. Sorry about that.

Mr. CRENSHAW. We only get 5 minutes.

Ms. MARTINEZ-PRATHER. It is a long answer, but that is where Texas is going in terms of its threat assessment.

Mr. CRENSHAW. OK.

Well, my time is up. Thank you all for being here. I am sorry I didn't get to everyone. Thank you all for being here. It takes a lot of guts, especially at a young age, to come here. So thank you very much.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you. Next we will recognize the gentlelady from Illinois, Ms. Underwood.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Children should be free to live their lives and go to school without the fear of gun violence. Unfortunately, this is not a reality for the 58 million students who are in their first weeks of a new school

year. Just this Tuesday, students from Courtland Elementary School in my district participated in their first active-shooter drill of the year. This is one of the many active-shooter drills and trainings students and teachers will participate in this year to prepare for a day we all hope will never come.

Mr. Schachter, thank you so much for being here to honor your son and to protect communities around the country. Ms. Hogg, thank you so much for joining us here today and sharing your experience. Thank you for your leadership. You, your brother, and your fellow advocates are an incredible inspiration to me.

I also applaud March for Our Lives peace plan for a safer America, which makes a number of recommendations to help ensure our communities are safe from gun violence. When I reviewed your plan, I was especially glad to see that it includes expanding background checks and dedicating annual funding for gun violence prevention research. Proposals that I am proud the House has passed this year. These are just the first in a series of necessary steps.

So Ms. Hogg in your testimony, you encourage investments in mental health resources in schools. Can you tell us more about why these investments are so important to students like you?

Ms. HOGG. Well, thank you for that. I feel kind-of hyped-up. So I think I have said this, I am just going to reiterate some things that I have said before. Like I said, we need nonaggressive proactionary measures because when we put in these measures, by that I mean, security measures and not mental health measures, it is almost as if our students are being punished for the ways of the world to protect us. Punishment to protect is something that has been shown to be ineffective.

Additionally, we must not be suffocated by school security measures and by having mental—trained mental health professionals there. I think that is helping, you know. I think that is decreasing the amount of suffocation that these increased security measures are causing.

I think when it comes to school security specifically, mental health professionals can help us deal with the increase of security due to the ways of the world, like I said, the lack of action around gun violence prevention. I think specific mental health counselors, not just guidance counselors—because I cannot tell you the amount of times before even the shooting that happened at my school, I went to my guidance counselor and the ratio of guidance counselor to student number is something that is outrageous to me.

I remember—I didn't do the math until after, and at a school Marjory Stoneman Douglas was about 4,500 kids and there were like 4 or 5 guidance counselors. So I remember my guidance counselor did not know my name until after the shooting when I went to her to ask for help and then again, I had to schedule toward the end of the week because she said she was busy because it was when spring was and she was trying to get kids into college.

But really, mental health professionals have helped me so much and even then, I mean, I had some difficulty with the mental health professionals that were put in place at my school as a reactive measure after the shooting that occurred. But we have to ensure that, especially if it is in the post of a school shooting, these people are trauma-trained.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Yes.

Ms. HOGG. Because if you put a guidance counselor who spends the majority of their time doing academic counseling into a situation where kids have watched their friends be murdered and bleed out on the floor next to them, it doesn't work. Trying to get a kid into college and trying to explain to the kid why they saw what they saw is something that is impossible.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Thank you.

Ms. HOGG. Thank you.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. The conversation around keeping our school safe has to include a discussion on how we can ensure that students feel safe again at school after the traumatic event as you just described.

Last year *The Washington Post* had an analysis which found that 187,000 students had been exposed to gun violence at schools since Columbine. We are facing a future in which hundreds of thousands of Americans will be carrying these physical and mental scars for the rest of their lives.

Can you talk a little bit, and briefly, about the long-term challenges that you and your classmates face in the aftermath of the shooting? We touched on the trauma, but anything else that you want to share with the committee today?

Ms. HOGG. Yes. I mean, additionally, when it comes to what you guys can do to help in aiding in trauma, the first thing you can do is address gun violence as an issue and take action on that because, at least for my trauma, I know many other of my friends and other victims of gun violence, every single week when another shooting happens and we see it on the news whether it be a mass shooting or a local shooting in a community nearby, we are retraumatized.

We feel as though we are back in the moment that we went through a shooting of ourselves and those stages of grief restart every single week. Every single week—sorry I am continuing on—but every single week I watch *CBS Sunday Morning* and they usually address school shootings when they happen.

So every single Sunday for a long time—and that has been a family tradition of mine since I was like 5 years old watching that—I had to stop watching it because I would hear the stories of the people that went through the school shootings every single Sunday and I could no longer do it because I wouldn't be ready to go to school the next day mentally.

So that is the first thing you can do, addressing gun violence as an epidemic.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Yes, Ms. Hogg. Thank you.

As a nurse I know it is not uncommon for people who have lived through school shootings to experience post-traumatic stress and other traumas. This is especially true for children and we are going to work to address it. Thanks to all the witnesses for being here.

I yield back my time.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you. I now recognize the gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Guest.

Mr. GUEST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also have an experience with school shootings. As a prosecutor, I had the opportunity to be involved in the investigation and preparing a case for trial of one

of the first school shootings in the country, the Pearl High School shooting.

On October 1, 1997, Luke Woodham, early that morning, killed his mother before going to school. He then concealed a rifle in an overcoat, entered Pearl High School where he then opened fire on multiple students killing Christina Menefee and Lydia Dew and injuring 7 other students. I am also aware of the mental health aspect because Luke Woodham also had mental health issues and attempted at trial to claim that the jury should find him not guilty by reason of insanity.

The jury rejected that claim, and even though the jury found that he did suffer from mental illness, that that mental illness did not arise to the level where he should not be held responsible for his actions and Luke Woodham today is currently serving 3 life sentences plus 140 years. But one of the actions on that day was an action by one of the school administrators.

The school administrator who was there in school when the school administrator heard gunfire, he immediately went to his vehicle, he obtained his firearm, and he was able to apprehend Luke Woodham before he left the campus that day. I will tell you from my investigation and my working with law enforcement, we believe and are very confident that his actions that day saved additional lives.

Because of his prompt response, because there was additional rounds of ammunition, Luke Woodham would have continued this rampage if he would not have been apprehended very quickly. I am aware that in response to Parkland that recently earlier this year, the legislature in Florida passed a law which was signed by the Governor that would allow school officials in Florida to be armed.

It expands what they call in Florida the Guardian Program, and that program, though, does set forth stipulations. Those stipulations include, No. 1, that the school district must approve the measures so, therefore, schools are not required to do that, but schools have the option to opt in.

No. 2, teachers must volunteer for the program. No one is required to participate, but teachers have the opportunity to volunteer. They must undergo background checks, there must be psychiatric evaluations, and there also must be specific training by law enforcement to make sure that teachers are trained.

So, Mr. Maples, my question to you is, do you believe that the response by the Florida legislature in allowing school districts to opt in to a system that I just referred to, do you believe that should be part of this discussion that we are having as it relates to school violence and school shootings?

Mr. MAPLES. So let me start out by saying this is an incredibly complex issue, the school safety in general, and I think that is pretty clear from the testimony and certainly from all of your questions. As part of what we are trying to do in New Jersey and that is the only thing I can answer to is the New Jersey aspect of this, we are looking at every solution out there whether it be the violence prevention, whether it be measures like arming teachers. We are looking at everything.

But I will tell you that the very first steps—and I think Mr. Crenshaw asked a question about what are the next steps that we

take, it has to be about that initial training exactly what Mr. Schachter was talking about, adhering to those best practices, the plan. No plan survives first contact. That is something we used to say in my community and I worked at CIA for most of my career protecting people. It is what I did and no plan survives first contact.

We have to have a plan in place and until—one great example is, you can have the best S.W.A.T. team in the world on standby in the east wing of a school like Stoneman Douglas and if somebody lets him in the back door on another wing, people are going to die and it is an unfortunate consequence of that. So we have to talk about locking the doors as Mr. Schachter said. Teaching kids not to open the doors.

So I will tell you that while we looked at those, we really want to make sure those fundamental foundational aspects are in place, first and foremost. We will get to that conversation.

Mr. GUEST. I would agree with you. Our first mission should be that our children, when we put them on the bus or parents drop them off at schools, that even before those children are educated that they return home safely to their families and so I understand that and I have worked with law enforcement and I have worked with other groups to try to make our schools safe.

First and foremost, we want to be able to prevent anyone from going on to the school to accomplish any act of violence, and I understand that. There are multiple programs and we are talking about prevention, but in the case where someone does enter on to the school grounds and where there is an active-shooter situation, do you believe that laws such as those passed in Florida, should those be things that we are also talking about? Should that be part of the discussion, the overall global discussion on how we are going to protect our children?

I have a sophomore in high school and every day when he goes to school, I am confident he is going to return, but I know just as you have talked about as well. We always say it is not going to happen in our community. That is going to happen some where else. That is not going to happen in my school.

I have seen first-hand it happen in my community. I know about it and so my question is, once we get past the things that we are going to try to do to, first of all, prevent is arming teachers, should that be something that we should consider as a last resort to make sure that we can stop the shooting as quickly as possible?

Mr. MAPLES. Just to simply sum up, as part of looking at addressing and everything, I think we should have the conversation about everything. Whatever we can do to support and protect our students, but recognizing that things like training, things like real world pulling the trigger is a very difficult thing to do and making sure that somebody's prepared to do that and I think Ms. Hogg summed it up as far as teachers are there to teach and so it can be a big challenge for them to adopt a mind set that they are then a protector in that way with a weapon, for example.

So yes, we should consider everything on the table and have reasonable discourse about it 100 percent, but as a last measure at the end of that conversation, once you hit the fundamentals, then I think we should have that conversation, again, very carefully be-

cause there are a lot of challenges associated with it, if that makes sense.

Mr. GUEST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I apologize for going over.

I yield back.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you. The gentleman from Louisiana is recognized, Mr. Richmond.

Mr. RICHMOND. Let me thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this hearing today on a very complex but serious matter and I will just respond to my colleague, Mr. Guest, that we are really all just a product of our life experiences and they shape how we think of things, and I know the conversation about arming teachers.

I coached high school baseball and Mr. Schachter mentioned interoperability and the ability to communicate. I would in my life experience, I would have grave concern as a baseball coach if there was an active-shooter situation about what happens if I have a gun and the perpetrator has a gun and the police officers get there and have to decide who is the good guy and who is the bad guy.

In my experience, most times people, especially police, assume that I am the bad guy and that would worry me, but I don't think it is something that we can't have a conversation about and I think interoperability is important and we went through that after Hurricane Katrina where we lost 1,500 people that we could not talk to each other. The fact that when these incidents occur you can't talk to each other is very scary. That part of the conversation is really about limiting the carnage.

I really want us to focus on preventing it in the first place and so when we have that conversation, I think there are small steps we can take such as universal background checks, things of that nature. Limiting the size of ammunition magazines, if we are talking about limiting carnage.

But my question for you, Ms. Hogg, would be that do you think students are ready for a see something, say something approach, which has made this country safer in airports and to terrorism and the question would be, do you think our students are ready for approach like a see something, say something?

Ms. HOGG. First of all, thank you for that question. I think it is really important in this conversation.

So I can speak on behalf of myself, but not every student, of course. But for myself how I personally feel about the whole idea of see something, say something, is that, although it is important, although it can prevent major things like what happened at my school, it puts a certain pressure on the student as though it is our responsibility to take care of these things. After something happens, like what happened at my school, often times I feel as though students felt as though they were being the ones being accountable for the Government and police officers in action at my school.

So as much as I think it is important and I think it is a good way, a good noninvasive, pretty noninvasive way of preventing these things from happening, I genuinely do not think it is drastic enough.

Additionally, much like what happened with increased security at places like airports and everywhere else after everything that happened in September 2001, I think we need to acknowledge that

there are always—when you have that situation see something, say something, there is going to be personal biases that are injected into the minds, the souls of individuals who are being the ones who are supposed to be seeing something and saying something.

I think that leads to a lot of danger within regards to whether that be a student seeing something and saying something about a student maybe just because of their personal bias, personal racial bias, or personal ideologic bias, if you know what I am saying.

Mr. RICHMOND. I do. I think that something this complex and something this drastic, we really do need a belt-and-suspenders-type approach to it so whether that is more school counselors who would also have an obligation to see something and say something where there is a concern, I look at it how we fight terrorism in this country and we do it with intelligence and information gathering, and I think that at some point we all have—unfortunately, we all have that responsibility and we would hope that people don't bring in their personal bias, but it is America.

We are humans and I think that, you know, it is a problem and as much as we can prepare for the active-shooter situation, what we really want is to prevent it. I will just tell you as a parent who drops a kid off to kindergarten every day that I am possible, I am very fearful that he doesn't go home.

As I bought his school uniforms this year, Mr. Schachter, I am sure that you have had to go through this especially because you have other children, I had to make a decision do I buy the kevlar square that goes in the backpack so that I can teach him to hide behind it in case of an active-shooter situation. Parents shouldn't have to be doing that.

When I was in high school, our drills consisted of stop, drop, and roll. Now the drills that our children are going through are run, hide, and fight. So the real thing is that we as Americans also have to accept our responsibility as adults to the divide, to the hate, to the bullying, and to all the other things that are adding to this sense.

Because if it is not in a school, then it will be in a church like Mother Emanuel. If it is not in a church like Mother Emanuel, it will be Tree of Life Synagogue. If it is not there, it will be at a Safeway store where our colleague, Gabby Giffords, was shot. If it is not at a grocery store, it will be on a baseball field where our colleague Steve Scalise was shot. We have to protect our most vulnerable, which is our children, but we have to do a better job as Americans of leading, loving, and showing the leadership to prevent this.

So I think you all did your part today by being here and I think Congress needs to do our part by enacting those reasonable measures that can stop these things before they start.

So thank you for being here.

Mr. PAYNE. I would like to thank the gentleman and, you know, it is unfortunate that this year one of the highest-selling products in New Jersey for going back to school were bulletproof book bags.

I now recognize the gentlelady from New York, Ms. Clarke.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I thank our panelists for really lending your expertise and your commonsense concerns to today's discussion. Columbine, Virginia Tech,

Sandy Hook, Umpqua Community College, Parkland, each time our Nation experiences another school shooting, we send out our thoughts and prayers, but thoughts and prayers don't stop bullets.

Twenty years have passed since Columbine, but school shootings have become only more and more common. We need to take action; we must take action. We need to and must confront, tackle, and end this gun violence epidemic once and for all.

Ms. Hogg, I want to get from you how your daily life has changed since that shooting?

Ms. HOGG. So when I was preparing for my testimony today and we were discussing this, I realized that pretty much everything in my life has changed. I think one of the greatest changes was the loss, not necessarily, the physical loss of people like my brother and other victims and my friends that went through the school shooting alongside me, but the loss of our past selves, the loss of ourselves who were innocent and believed like Mr. Schachter said so eloquently today that we believed that this would never happen to us.

I mean, I could go through the specifics, but it would take me probably days, but every single aspect of my life has changed. It seems as though, like I stated before, I was 14 when I experienced the school shooting and that is the age when kids are kind of ready to have that John Hughes high school experience, if you know what I am saying, and for me I went directly from—it seems as though I had to go from childhood to adulthood and skip that period of my life that most people do have the chance to experience where they get to be—they get to be a teenager, they get to be a child, and I think about this every single day.

My goal for this year was to learn how to be a teenager and that is something that no child who is 16 should have to experience. But I mean, like I said, the fact that I am even here today, the fact that I spend my weekends on the Hill when I can talking with my policy makers, everything has changed, and I really just hope that no other child has to have this experience of losing those precious teenage years where they get the chance to have—to be stupid in a sense, to have fun, but I think that is one of the greatest ways my life has been affected.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you for sharing that with us.

Mr. Maples, when you testified in front of the subcommittee last year, the horrific shootings in Parkland, Florida, Santa Fe, Texas, were still recent and many States were just in the beginning phases of instituting policies to improve school safety and in some cases gun control measures.

Now over a year out, can you tell the committee of any challenges that you have had while instituting new school security measures and are there any lessons learned that you think are important for other States to know?

Mr. MAPLES. Well, I will start off by addressing the challenges piece. Some of the challenges have been making sure that the school districts are all getting the relevant information in a coordinated way. We continue to work on that and that is something we are able to do at the State level in New Jersey.

The implementation of the see something, say something—Mr. Richmond just brought up that piece and in New Jersey we are doing that. We have rolled that in through an attorney general's

directive that all suspicious activity, that school-related threats, are rolled into our See Something Say Something Campaign.

New Jersey's a little bit different than a lot of other States. My office coordinates everything from the Federal, State, to local levels, so the bureau, the FBI, gets their leads from my folks at one hub location or fusion center, and that is a little bit different model than many other States.

I will tell you that getting school districts to recognize those threats, in the See Something, Say—what are the threats and reporting those to law enforcement who then report it to us or directly to us, that is a challenge, but it is something that we are really focused on, getting that public messaging out there.

My staff is constantly engaging with the schools and one of the great benefits we have in New Jersey is the Department of Education, the commissioner has essentially loaned us his school safety team. They actually report to me, but they are education employees. They come to Homeland Security spaces.

So we are trying to really coalesce around that one common goal of protecting our schools together in that way.

So the challenges of joining any type of unit—you wouldn't think of Homeland Security and education kind-of linking up the way that we do, but we do and we are really focused on that.

Ms. CLARKE. We appreciate that, Mr. Maples. Let me just close by saying that having been a victim myself watching my colleague getting gunned down in the New York City Council, that trauma never leaves you. So Ms. Hogg, I thank you for your courage. The trauma goes beyond what anyone can imagine when you are in a space, you are a survivor.

There is so many other dynamics, so I can relate to all that you have shared with us today because I am still recovering to this very day.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PAYNE. I would like to thank the gentlelady.

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Green, is recognized.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Ranking Member as well, and I apologize for the condition that we find ourselves in. I say I apologize because we have failed you. The adults have failed you.

We shouldn't have allowed unlimited assault weapons on the streets capable of killing scores in seconds. We failed you, and we ought to do something about it. We don't have the will. We have lost our way. We failed you.

We are at a point regrettably in our history where we have to prepare for the unthinkable to deal with the inconceivable. It is where we are. Gone are the days when children had to have as a part of their exercise a fire drill. There is an active-shooter drill now.

Gone are the days when there was a rumor of a person having a knife on campus at my school and the principal just stopped everything, brought us all into the auditorium, and had a meeting, who has the knife? Now we have assault weapons on campuses.

So we have to deal with the inconceivable, and I have to ask you about something that I regrettably must ask about, but I think we have to prepare for this unthinkable inconceivable event and that

would be, of course, whether or not we are ready to deal with a chemical or biological event.

We can't wait. We have to prepare for the unthinkable if we are going to deal with the inconceivable. So I ask as gently as I can, are we adequately prepared for an attack of this kind on a school campus where it should never happen, where it would be inconceivable? Are we having any drills, any information, intelligence accorded our students so that they can deal with these things?

Do we have proper equipment available? Where are we? If we are not there, then perhaps the adults won't fail us as we go forward. I am one of the adults. Would someone care to answer, please?

Mr. SCHACHTER. Yes I mean, obviously we are extremely unprepared. Our county doesn't even have an active-shooter policy, let alone a policy to protect us from a chemical or biological attack.

We are just trying to get teachers to teach with a locked door, you know. We are just trying to move the needle. We are so far away from where we need to be, but we can prevent, you know, 80, 90 percent of these attacks, you know.

We have got the gold standard in anonymous reporting app was developed in Colorado. It is called Safe to Tell. They have stopped thousands of young people from committing suicide. Suicide is the homicide issue. If we can stop suicide, we can stop homicide and they have stopped hundreds of school shootings.

Post-Parkland, we have had dozens of States implement those anonymous threat reporting apps. Every day we hear in the news about mass shootings that are stopped by courageous people that are sending in tips and kids do it. So we can stop a lot of these as we were talking about on the prevention side, but we have to prepare.

We can't stop 100 percent of these. We have to be cognizant of that, and so that is why—what are we going to do? We need to decide what are we going to do if a guy with a gun walks on that school campus, how are we going to save lives? That is what we need. That needs to be addressed, unfortunately, you know, all over this country.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Thank you. I could not agree with you more, and I regret that we find ourselves being reactive when we had a great opportunity to be proactive and deal with these issues such that we wouldn't have to deal with the unthinkable, but there is a future and we still have the opportunity to change this circumstance if we but only will acquire the courage and the will.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. I thank the gentleman.

I would like to now recognize the gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I want to ask whether the chairman, the gentleman from Florida, wants to go and I will go after him.

You all right?

OK. Just wanted to offer it to you.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thanks.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, thank you and to the Ranking Member for this very vital hearing, and I thank the witnesses. We are sometimes in overlapping hearings and we have to make our

way to an important hearing. Let me acknowledge, in particular, a dad who lost his son. Your face is familiar. I know that you wish that it was not, and I thank you for putting your energy in a place where those of us who are parents would never want to imagine.

I think this committee is well-suited and this House and this present leadership with the Members of this committee, with Congressman Deutch are prepared to listen and to adhere to some of the things that we can do. We don't want to call the role, but I think you know, why didn't it stop at Sandy Hook? Why wasn't something done? We tried very hard.

So I want to first start with Lauren. We work a lot in Houston with March for Our Lives. I like the word "march" because we follow, but I know that it is important that we act.

Let me ask you this question because I have talked to teenagers who, like you, have to learn to be a teenager. What is it like with your peers to have to live with the idea of death, death of your fellow students, death at a school site? What should we know about that as you are growing up?

Ms. HOGG. So for myself because I was 14 years old when this happened as I stated previously, I think that is a pivotal time in your life. I mean, all of the 4 high school years are a pivotal time in your life. It is when a lot of your brain development occurs, it is when you are supposed to learn a lot of things at school.

When you have something like a school shooting, when you have something like your friends and teachers being murdered in your classroom next to you, I think there is something drastic that happens within yourself and I think it is important to address that within regards to trauma to gun violence, it is hard to heal when this issue continues every single day. It is kind of like rubbing salt into the wound that is our trauma.

I mean, the previous question earlier that I was asked when it was how has your life changed, every single day. I think just every single aspect—like when I go into a restaurant, I have to sit with my back not against the door because I will feel like somebody will come in. When I go to a movie theater, I have to always make sure I know where the exits are and know if I can be close enough to be able to run out in time.

Even in crowded spaces, places I used to go and love to go to, whether that be Disneyland or a concert, I can't go there without being scared that something is going to happen. So even the things that would be traditionally viewed as fun and an escape turn into themselves an act of trauma where you don't know what to do and you don't know how to act.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

Ms. HOGG. Yes. Thank you.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me ask Alex's father.

I am going to give you a combined answer. You obviously can't hear that from Alex, but for us to do something along with what we have heard from our experts, you are an expert in terms of making a school solid, but in doing this comprehensively, we have to deal with guns—this is my question—mental health and added resources for those students who we miss.

I have been working on for many years anti-bullying, which is accelerated, cyber-bullying and otherwise, and then a positive way

of reinforcing schools. So would you respond to that in the context of your organization and your group.

Mental health, anti-bullying, guns, and the idea of how we strengthen a school to protect its most precious inhabitants.

Mr. SCHACHTER. You know, I am on the commission that is investigating the Marjory Stoneman Douglas tragedy and we had a presentation by Flagler High School which developed a culture and climate survey that they give to tribute to all of their students and it has made their school safe. That—you know, I think that sets a deficiency in our schools that we are not doing culture-climate surveys of our students and of our teachers because to reduce violence on campus, reduce bullying, if we don't know what is happening on campus, we can't fix it.

I alluded in my presentation and in questions that we don't know—you know, schools underreport violence on campus. We need to get an accurate reporting. In Florida, we require schools to report in violence and we came to the conclusion that what they are reporting is absolutely garbage and it is totally incorrect. We have now put measures in place to the commissioner of education to financially penalize superintendents that consistently underreport school violence.

So we need to get that under control, but we need to find out what is happening first so that we can tackle this bullying problem and we can provide better mental health to our students and reduce violence on campus which will reduce violence in our community because if we are not giving kids when they are in school the tools to deal with rejection and failure, as they get older, we have horrible consequences.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank you and the experts as well. My time has expired, but let me just say to the Chairman using the experts, but using the passion of our two witnesses who have experienced it first-hand can help us be guided in the right direction for working on this very crucial issue.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. PAYNE. I would like to thank the gentlelady.

I recognize the patient gentleman from Florida, Mr. Deutch.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to you and the Ranking Member for calling the hearing. I am grateful to you and your staff for including 2 of my constituents as witnesses and extending the invitation to me to join you as your guest.

I also want to express my gratitude to the thoughtful and dedicated participation of so many Members of this committee today.

Thanks to the witnesses, all of you, for your testimony and your hard work to make students safer.

First, I would like to seek unanimous consent to enter a statement for the record from Tony Montalto, the surviving father of Gina Montalto and president of "Stand with Parkland", a group formed by parents from Stoneman Douglas, if I may.

Mr. PAYNE. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

STATEMENT OF TONY MONTALTO, PRESIDENT, STAND WITH PARKLAND—THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FAMILIES FOR SAFE SCHOOLS

SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

Chairman Payne, Ranking Member King, and Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement for the record for today's hearing. Nothing is more important than the safety of our Nation's children and I appreciate your decision to hold this hearing on this important issue.

My name is Tony Montalto. I am the president of Stand with Parkland—The National Association of Families for Safe Schools. Stand with Parkland was founded by the families of the children and school staff murdered in the Parkland school massacre on February 14, 2018. I lost my 14-year-old daughter Gina on that day and have engaged in this activism because her death was preventable. It is our desire to keep any other parent from experiencing the profound loss that myself and others have gone through as a result of this tragedy.

We are now part of the many who bring a human face to these grim statistics: Since Columbine, there have been 710 school shootings in the United States; 341 people have been killed and 653 injured, including the 17 killed and the additional 17 injured in the Parkland shooting.[1] Using our unique and inclusive approach, Stand with Parkland has grown into a National organization focused on identifying and advocating for practical solutions that will keep our kids and teachers safe in school. We are fundamentally a non-partisan group. We believe that the safety of our kids and teachers in school is not a political issue and we will work with anyone who shares our goal for safe schools.

Stand with Parkland's founding families have different political views, but when it comes to protecting our children and staff members at school, we all agree on 3 key outcomes: Secure the school campus, implement better mental health screening and support programs, and practice responsible firearms ownership. We are committed to advocating for practical public safety reforms focused on these goals. Absent addressing all 3 of these components, the uniquely American tragedy of mass school shootings will not find a solution.

Personal responsibility and a desire for change are paramount to this effort, and it will require action at all levels of government to make these goals a reality. Violence in our schools affects everyone. It is an American epidemic and it is time for us to come together as the American family to do something about it—to demand action from our elected leaders.

Even now, 20 years after Columbine, our Nation is still grappling with this issue. It is extremely unfortunate that it took the murder of our loved ones at school to rekindle the National discussion. The voices of the surviving students kept this tragic story in the news. However, it has been the relentless pursuit of the facts and the determination of the victims' families that has driven change to both policies and laws across the country. Those changes began with the help of former Governor (now Senator) Rick Scott and the bipartisan support of the Florida legislature when the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act was passed in March 2018. Stand with Parkland's advocacy began when our families spoke with lawmakers from both sides of the aisle about the importance of passing the law to protect students and staff members from harm. Our collective voice made a difference then and we will continue to use it to prevent anyone else from suffering a similar tragedy. We want to ensure that children and staff members are safe at school and can focus on their true purpose: Learning and growing into responsible young adults.

Our children are the future. This is a fairly common adage on which there is almost universal agreement. But it is not enough to merely acknowledge this and repeat it in public—that future is at risk and action is necessary. Before this tragedy, we had happy families. We had whole families. Now that is forever changed—our daughters, sons, and spouses never made it home from school that day.

When we look at the history of mass school shootings, we are here to point out that this issue affects all segments of America, all sharing the same misconception that it couldn't happen in their community. That false sense of security is dangerous.

This is not a Republican problem; it's not a Democratic problem; it cannot be laid at the feet of either end of the political spectrum or any group. This is an American problem that requires collective action. Our children are in danger; inaction in the face of that danger is not merely negligent but constitutes a dereliction of duty.

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[1] Center for Homeland Defense and Security, "K–12 School Shooting Database," 2019.

While our organization supports certain specific proposals, we recognize the importance of a fulsome discussion and building consensus as we develop and implement specific solutions. This model of discussion and willingness to compromise, while maintaining a steadfast commitment to meaningful action and fighting against mere window-dressing, was effective when we worked on school safety legislation in Florida—leaving partisan politics behind was instrumental.

As a result of this willingness to compromise, and the commitment to not permit perfection to stand in the way of meaningful progress, we supported the recent passage in Florida of SB 7030—Implementation of Legislative Recommendations of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission—even though we did not agree with all of its provisions.

While Stand with Parkland supports armed guardians at schools, we believe that arming teachers is a misguided idea that could actually undermine efforts to safeguard our schools against mass shootings like the one that took our loved ones. We believe our teachers should be focused on teaching and trained law enforcement or school security officers should be provided to protect the students and staff at school. However, even though we opposed this provision, we supported the majority of the bill and accordingly worked to ensure its passage because we believed the legislation made our schools safer.

Our Nation needs an open and continuous discussion that leads to the collective development of specific solutions. Stand with Parkland is firm in its advocacy for a holistic approach toward improving the safety of all the Nation's schools by:

(1) Securing the school campus

(2) Improving mental health screening and support programs

(3) Supporting responsible firearms ownership.

All of these issues must be addressed in a meaningful way and we have developed specific proposals that can help achieve our goals in each of these areas:

Securing the Campus.—The Parkland shooter walked onto campus through an open and unmonitored gate; even though he was identified as he entered campus, nobody called a code red until more than 3 minutes after the shooting started. Furthermore, the school did not have an active-shooter policy or any plan for dealing with school shootings.

Securing the school campus starts with securing the perimeter and creating a single point of entry. Other low-cost items such as locked doors, safe corners in classrooms, and active-shooter policies and drills are vital to protecting America's schools. Taking these straight-forward steps will give our students and teachers a chance of survival when confronted by a school shooter. I want to emphasize that we must encourage all of our school administrators to prepare for an active shooter by having a policy in place and training students and staff accordingly. In this same spirit, it is essential that we develop a Federal standard for minimum school safety features and best practices, as well as bring the resources of our Federal Government to bear. We need Congress to provide continuous Federal funding of school security enhancements, upon which State and local governments can rely.

There has been some progress—the Departments of Health and Human Services, Justice, Education, and Homeland Security are working together to create a clearinghouse website that will serve as a National resource. This clearinghouse will provide school safety best practices collected from various schools and related organizations. Our organization has continued to be involved in this process and our entire membership strongly supports its continued development. In light of the potential impact of this project, we hope that the House can lead the way with a bipartisan bill that will codify and provide funding for this groundbreaking initiative.

Improving Mental Health Screening and Support Programs.—To improve mental health screening, support, and intervention, we need to take actions such as funding and promoting suicide detection and intervention programs because 67 percent of mass shooters are suicidal.[2] Additionally, Congressional action is needed to relax and clarify Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations, so that schools, law enforcement, and mental health professionals are allowed to share mental health information, as well as permit the release of mental health information for threat assessments and background checks. Fixing these issues will allow for more effective use of the provisions enacted by the STOP School Violence Act, which was contained within the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018, and other existing laws. Permitting this exchange of information would allow a team of professionals—including school counselors, police, and mental health care providers—to assess at-risk individuals and likely prevent tragedies like the one that took our loved ones.

[2] US DHS, US Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center March 2018.

My daughter's killer, we've since found out, was known to the school, the sheriff's office, a local mental health agency, and the FBI, as an angry, violent, and potentially dangerous person. They never shared information about him; they never connected the dots. Because of this, Gina's killer was able to purchase a rifle legally. Had an effective threat assessment been conducted, and a corresponding exchange of information permitted, there may have been a better understanding of just how dangerous this individual was—my family could be whole today.

Additionally, more research is required to support threat assessments and their efficacy. The U.S. Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) is dedicated to the advanced research that is the basic building block of all threat assessments. In today's environment of ever-increasing threats, the NTAC needs more funding and resources. One path to provide this is through bipartisan legislation that has been introduced in both chambers, the Eagles Act. This bill is named after Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School's mascot and would help provide a lasting legacy to our beloved children and spouses who were murdered that day. We urge the House to consider and vote on this important legislation, which will help protect not only students and staff members, but any American from being subjected to similarly targeted violence.

Stand with Parkland also urges Congress to provide funding to support and implement successful "off-the-shelf" programs, such as Sandy Hook Promise's Know the Signs or It Starts with Hello. Additionally, there is a proven suicide prevention product developed by Columbia University: The Columbia Protocol, which provides an evidenced-based threshold for determining imminent risk. This protocol has already been adopted by the Department of Defense and many other governmental agencies. In fact, a total force roll-out by the Marine Corps helped lead to a 22 percent reduction in suicides.[3] These are only a few of the highly effective non-Governmental programs that could use a boost from the Federal Government to expand their reach and improve the safety of America's students and teachers.

Supporting Responsible Firearm Ownership.—There are many elements that contribute to responsible firearms ownership. This starts with enforcing the laws already on the books and personal responsibility. Owners of firearms must ensure they are practicing safe firearm storage, such as ensuring they are kept out of the reach of children, because many school shooters get their weapon from the home.

Another important area is Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO), or Red Flag laws, which can save lives by creating a way for family members and law enforcement to act before a situation escalates, providing an opportunity for the individual subject to the order to get help. ERPOs also touch on the mental health pillar of our holistic approach to school safety; they are powerful tools that enable law enforcement officers to protect themselves and the community at-large. In the wake of the Parkland tragedy, Florida enacted Red Flag laws with strong bipartisan support. As of this past February, 13 States had these powerful law enforcement tools in place, and it is likely that they have already saved many lives. Had these laws been in place on February 14, 2018, the numerous warnings regarding the murderer of our loved ones would have provided law enforcement a chance to remove the firearms from his home and Parkland would still be an idyllic town and our families would be whole instead of broken.

This year, Rep. Salud Carbajal (D–CA) reintroduced H.R. 1236, the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act of 2019. On September 10, the bill passed out of the House Judiciary Committee's gun violence prevention markup, moving it one step closer to a vote on the House floor. This bill would utilize Department of Justice funds to encourage States to enact laws that provide law enforcement or family members the option of obtaining a court order to prevent firearm purchases and possession by individuals who pose a significant threat to themselves or others, while also providing due process protections. Additionally, the bill establishes a grant program that would incentivize States to adopt extreme risk laws, which in turn would reduce gun deaths and injuries while protecting due process rights. We strongly urge Republicans and Democrats to support this bill and hope it is swiftly brought to the House floor for a vote.

Finally, our Nation must improve the current background check laws and make them more comprehensive. This can be achieved through legislation like H.R. 8, "the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019" that has been passed by the House of Representatives and we've been working with the Senate to consider similar legislation. We need to do more than just talk about these measures—the American public expects that our representatives will take meaningful action to protect our children.

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[3] Columbia University, "C–SSRS Helping to Reduce Suicide and Decrease Workload via Evidence-Based Thresholds for Imminent Risk," 2016.

While we commend our National leaders for taking some action, such as the recently-issued final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety from the Trump administration, these actions have continued the trend of only partially addressing this issue. The report contained recommended changes that address the first 2 items in our holistic approach, securing the school campus and better mental health programs, but little is mentioned regarding firearms. It is clear that the status quo is ineffective, or our loved ones would not have been shot and killed in their school on February 14, 2018.

We hope that the vast majority of Americans, who are in the ideological middle, come out and support the change for which Stand with Parkland—The National Association of Families for Safe Schools is advocating. Continued conversations about how we can't agree and what we don't agree on will not make our children safer. This Congress, and the Nation as a whole, needs to have an open discussion and actively listen to one another. This cannot be a rhetorical battle centered around partisan messaging and talking points—every step we take must be meaningful and make our children safer. We will be failing in the duty to protect our children and future generations of Americans if all we do is talk and take symbolic steps.

I would like to conclude by saying that there can be no more excuses. The safety of students and teachers at school is something that this country can unite around. We must stop the divisive rhetoric and work together to stop these uniquely American tragedies. Surely, where it concerns the safety of our children, there is more that unites than divides us.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record and your willingness to address this vital matter facing our Nation.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These families have varying political views, but they write when it comes to protecting our children and staff at school we all agree on 3 key outcomes: Secure the school campus, implement better mental health programs, and practice responsible firearms ownership. I hope their goals can be shared by all of us here today regardless of our political affiliation.

Mr. Schachter, Ms. Hogg, I feel so fortune to know you, so proud to represent you, and so utterly heartbroken by the circumstances that have brought us together. You are survivors of this horrible crisis of gun violence in America.

Mr. Schachter, you lost your beloved Alex. Ms. Hogg, you lost friends, classmates, and teachers. In addition to Alex, Alyssa, Scott, Martin, Nicholas, Aaron, Jaime, Chris, Luke, Cara, Gina, Joaquin, Alaina, Meadow, Helena, Carmen, and Peter were all lost at Marjory Stoneman Douglas on February 14, 2018, but you have turned your pain into action.

Mr. Schachter, you have been a fierce advocate for expanding the level of expertise in schools, school districts, and States to improve policies. You have become an expert in security infrastructure. I knew from the first moment I spoke with you that within a short period of time you would be a National leader on keeping our schools safe.

So I want to ask you, the EAGLES Act, H.R. 3714 will expand the National Threat Assessment Center. By doing that, what can that do to help ensure that schools have the expertise to keep their students and staff safe?

Mr. SCHACHTER. Thank you, Congressman, and thank you for everything you have done to protect our children. You have been a great championing of that.

As far as the EAGLES Act goes, I talked about this in my opening statement, I am a strong supporter. I hope that we can get the full committee support and pass this. It is great legislation.

We know that threat assessment teams, that the Secret Service, has developed protect the President and protect Congress and this is a major problem in schools. We know that threat assessments work, but, you know, it needs to be done correctly.

There was a threat assessment done on the murderer in 2016 that was completely botched. The problem was the assistant principal that did the threat assessment had no idea how to perform one. He had never conducted a threat assessment in his 30-year history, he didn't know where the paperwork was, and it was completely done wrong.

I feel that if it was done correctly, my little boy might be still alive today, so by passing the EAGLES Act, we can give education to all schools on proper threat assessments, to prevent these acts of targeted violence before they happen and we have got to stop being reactionary and be proactive, and that is what threat assessments do.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you very much.

Ms. Hogg, thanks for your leadership in your school and across the country through March for Our Lives and thanks for your really powerful testimony today.

The March for Our Lives Peace Plan for a Safer America includes a call, among other things, for community-based solutions. As part of that call, you support Representative Moore's bill, H.R. 2457, the National De-Escalation of Violence and Community Safety Training Act. One thing you have not had an opportunity to talk about is why community-based interventions is such an important part of your peace plan?

Ms. HOGG. Community-based intervention programs as we have talked about today, earlier when we are talking about proactive measures, are the perfect example of this. They go in before these things happen as I stated previously.

It is so important for us when we created this plan to include that because we have seen across the country and especially communities of color and lower socioeconomic communities how effective these are in preventing community gun violence.

I have some examples of individuals and stats about stuff that are within regards to violence intervention programs, but one of the greatest examples is Life Camp. It is out of the Bronx founded by this woman named Erica Ford and they have violence interrupters that go in and they train youth from the community how to be violence interrupters instead of inciters of this violence and how to keep out of this violence.

I think if we could apply that to our school system across the country, I cannot even imagine the great effects we would see in preventing things like what happened at our school.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am—I want to just thank you again. It is so clear from the testimony today from the expertise on this panel, from the dedication of all 4 of our panelists that there is more that we can do in a bipartisan way to help strengthen and bolster the efforts of our witnesses and people just like them all around the country to help keep our school safe. And to help keep kids safe and to prevent the kind of trauma that we have heard so eloquently spoken about.

We can do this and I am so grateful for your leadership on this issue. I look forward to working with you, and again, your extending an invitation for me to join you today is something that I will forever be grateful for.

Mr. PAYNE. Well, I would like to thank the gentleman for accepting the invitation and they are very fortunate to have you as their Representative in Congress. I know the work that you do tirelessly for your constituents and you have been proactive on these issues.

So I just thought it was fair you had the opportunity today to be here, so thank you.

We are going to go for a quick second round. I just wanted to ask Mr. Maples, as I mentioned in my opening statement, DHS along with other agencies is working on the clearinghouse that will compile best practices for various school safety practices, can you describe what you want to see out of a clearinghouse to make it useful for New Jersey?

Mr. MAPLES. Sure, absolutely. So one of my roles in addition to being the director of homeland security, I am also the Federally-designated homeland security adviser, which is a DHS designation, so we work hand-in-hand with Federal DHS on the wide variety of issues that we confront in the State of New Jersey.

I lead in to say that from a clearinghouse perspective, we absolutely welcome that. I think a place for a structured, directed, and concise plan, the best practices themselves can really help us bolster what we are trying to do at the State level.

We do a lot proactively in New Jersey, but having that Federal interface and to be able to point that back to someone from the Federal Government can be very powerful in talking to a superintendent across our 21 counties. So to the degree that the clearinghouse is coming on-line, we welcome it and I think that it will continue to help make our schools safe.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

I don't want to keep people much longer, but I just want to thank all the witnesses for their testimony today. This has been an honor for me to chair this hearing and hear from all of you, all with different experiences on this one very important subject.

Mr. Schachter, you brought up interoperability, which has been my main focus since 2012 arriving here on this committee and the author of the interoperability bill for DHS and just issues around school safety has been my main thrust.

So thank all of you for being here today for your expert testimony and with that—there is something I have to do here.

All right. Now that we have finished with our questions, I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter into the official record written testimony from the National Association of School Resource Officers, Everytown for Gun Safety, Sandy Hook Promise, the National Association of School Psychologists, the NAACP legal defense fund, and materials from the American Institute of Architects,* without objection, is so ordered.

[The information follows:]

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*A portion of the information has been retained in committee files and is also available at *http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/CAE_Report_v7_FINAL_interactive.pdf.*

STATEMENT OF JAY M. BROTMAN, AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS (AIA)

AUGUST 16, 2018

INTRODUCTION

Secretary DeVos, Secretary Azar, Secretary Nielsen, Attorney General Sessions, and Deputy Secretary Zais, thank you for the invitation to appear before you today. On behalf of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), it is an honor to partner with you and your staff to promote design solutions for the challenges and opportunities facing today's schools. For over 20 years, the AIA, through its Committee on Architecture for Education, has been working to develop and disseminate best practices in education architecture—ones that create positive learning environments while better safeguarding students and school faculty.

While I have designed many schools during my 40-plus years practicing architecture, perhaps none has been more impactful and fulfilling than the new Sandy Hook Elementary School. And while it is only I who appear before you today, the success of the new Sandy Hook school was possible only with the full participation and collaboration of several hundred partners including my fellow architects, our consulting engineers, the construction management team, the construction workers and most importantly the people of Newtown.

Not surprisingly, there was a significant focus to design this new school in a way that would prevent a tragedy of this caliber from happening again. To be clear though, no school design can stop all school violence, especially ones involving guns. There is no single "design solution" or design standard to prevent them. However, there are design principles and best practices that can help to mitigate risk, both before and during an act of mass violence such as a shooting.

In general, each school, whether a new build or a retrofit, must be designed for its unique student population, for its unique location, and to meet the needs of its unique community. More specifically, and of paramount importance, the primary goal of each school is to provide an inspiring, healthy environment that promotes learning. As we address this particular threat to children and adults in our schools, we must remember that schools are buildings that must be designed as schools first and foremost. Their security features, while vital and necessary, should be as passive as possible. They should be incorporated into the school's design, rather than define the school. Failing to do so puts children's education, emotional development, and pro-social behavior at risk. To that point, I'd like to provide some specific design principles and strategies that architects can routinely use.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

There has been much discussion about "hardening" schools. This may be the most common reaction to recent tragic events, and while hardening elements have their place within a strategic plan of security measures, hardening alone can be costly, ineffective, and counter-productive to a positive learning environment. Furthermore, physical design features, such as hardening, are only one leg of an effective School Security Plan. Hardening must be coordinated with Technology components, such as security cameras, and the third critical aspect, Operations, which are the safety protocols and procedures that need to be well-designed, rehearsed, and enforced.

With this 3-leg approach, the architects' key security design focus is "layering" the physical environment with bringing in those particular security elements that are most suitable to each unique design. This layered concept arose from Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design or CPTED. The goal of CPTED design principles is to Deter, Detect, and Delay the assailant, and last to Defend the occupants. With layering, if one design element or layer is breached, another layer will be encountered to continue to slow or limit the assailant's progress. "Layering" reinforces each selected security design solution to build in more minutes for first responders. School site and building designs can actually slow down an assailant, giving students and school personnel more time to react and position themselves securely while allowing law enforcement more time to arrive on the scene and intervene. This is critically important in all school settings, but especially in rural and more remote areas where the average law enforcement response time is longer because their jurisdictions cover more geography.

Architects utilize 5 primary strategies of CPTED: Territory Reinforcement, Natural Surveillance, Access Control, Image, and Access Hardening.

SANDY HOOK

When redesigning Sandy Hook Elementary School, we applied these design principles based on input and feedback from the community. As architects, it is our re-

sponsibility to bring together the community's perspectives, especially when designing a school. Convening stakeholders and gathering their feedback is central to how architects craft a design solution—one that is both functionally responsive and contextually sensitive to a variety of community stakeholders' interests.

In the case of Sandy Hook and given the nature of the attack, many parents initially envisioned impenetrable fencing and high windows. However, these reactions had to be balanced against the negative effect such overt security tactics would have on both students and staff. Instead of costly perimeter fencing, CPTED principles rely on defining the site through a combination of minimal fencing, landscaping materials, and natural geography, which achieves the goal of signaling where you are being observed and monitored. There are no blind approaches to the school.

Incoming traffic is diverted into staff or visitor parking lots, while school busses and deliveries are the only vehicles allowed to enter the bus loop that comes closest to the school. All of this activity is readily visible from the school. This natural surveillance is maximized through careful design of vegetation and the placement of the main office to provide an unobstructed view of the approach to the school. Natural surveillance is paired with surveillance by technology, in the form of well-placed video cameras, to offer early detection.

Architects are especially concerned with maximizing transparency to the greatest extent practicable within the school. Not only does it allow for more passive natural surveillance and supervision of the surrounding exterior space of the school by staff and faculty, it also allows more daylight to illuminate classrooms while using less electrical energy, and as research shows, daylight is one of the most powerful antidepressants and positive boosts to one's mood and ability to concentrate and learn. This transparency can also establish a greater sense of school community among the students and faculty.

As noted earlier, a reaction to limit windows or a desire for only high windows also removes the ability for inhabitants to view the outdoors and eliminating natural surveillance, but also eliminating the proven benefits of a connection to nature. Based on research, high windows would be perceived as a fortress, and young elementary school students would have been too short to see out the windows. Instead our approach was to slope the grade away from the building, such that the windows are higher to a potential assailant but feel normal to the children inside.

Another example from Sandy Hook incorporated a variety of requirements in a single design element. Our security consultant had advised that an important layer would be a stand-off area from the front of the school, where both vehicles and people would not be allowed. At the same time, our sustainability consultant was advising on environmentally-friendly methods of diverting rain water from the school roof. And for the front façade design, we were looking to create a beautiful approach as well as something symbolic of the community identity. Our solution to all three concerns was a rain garden. With hardy colorful plants and a sunken rock "river," it is a decorative natural element that runs along the entire front of the school—creating a moat of sorts, that is clearly not friendly to cars or people. The rain water is channeled into the garden where it percolates into the soil and is naturally cleansed by the plants. The design then has three small footbridges to cross the rain garden to enter the school—a reflection of the community identity and the many streams and rivers of the area that are crossed everyday with bridges throughout town.

The children are unaware about the security benefits provided by the rain garden—and they don't need to know. For them, the rain garden is a teaching tool where they can see and learn about the cycle of water and the seasonal plants with which we share our land. This small but impactful example shows the value of taking a comprehensive, design-centered approach to school security: It is a highly-specific answer to multiple physical and emotional considerations at once.

CONCLUSION

The desire to craft design solutions for the challenges facing schools is absolutely a priority for communities. As architects, we see this every day. However, 2 on-going problems prevent local school officials from implementing these solutions: Lack of access to quality information regarding design solutions and the ability to fund them. Consider that a survey was conducted 1 year after the Sandy Hook shooting. It polled architecture and design firms across the country with the simple question: Has there been an increase in requests from education officials for security features in schools. Most of the responses were "no" or "about the same".

Part of the reason for this was lack of funding. However, the other part was due to a lack of quality information. The truth is local education officials don't have reliable information. Most don't know where to begin or what information to trust in

their efforts to make their schools safe and secure. These two issues could be solved by allowing certain Federal grants to fund design services and furthermore, establishing a Federally-housed school design clearing house that serves as an independent, unbiased, and "one stop shop" informational repository for State and local education officials.

In conclusion, while there are limitations on design to prevent these tragedies, design can significantly mitigate them. Therefore, the AIA would like to continue working with you and your Congressional colleagues on potential solutions that can truly help protect our children.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak. I look forward to your questions, and, on behalf of the AIA, continuing to be a resource on this important issue.

ATTACHMENT

WHERE WE STAND: SCHOOL DESIGN AND STUDENT SAFETY

Protecting the health, safety, and welfare of building occupants is fundamental to what architects do. Over the course of almost 2 decades, architects have worked with school communities across the country in response to repeated acts of deadly violence targeting students and educators. Architects feel a deep responsibility to contribute to solutions on this troubling issue. We're committed to working with all concerned stakeholders and every level of government, on both sides of the aisle, to keep our children safe.

As architects, we believe that schools are intended to be communities and should be planned without sacrificing the inherent positive qualities of the school environments we all desire for our children. We know there is no one-size-fits-all design solution to school safety. School design must adapt to differing and evolving community concerns, support student health and safety, and create productive learning environments, all while respecting stretched school budgets.

Architects address social, psychological, economic, and environmental factors in building design. Architects believe that innovative architectural design solutions can keep learners and learning central to the decision-making process in designing safe schools. As the professional association of architects, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) supports architects and their communities by dedicating resources and expertise in the following ways:

AIA will lead efforts at the local, State, and Federal levels of government to update school design guidelines.—Architects can offer strategies designed to avert and restrict violence while preserving open learning environments that can positively influence student behavior and create more connected, open school communities. Achieving this critical balance in schools requires the development of best practice design standards and guidelines. AIA commits to advising on best practices and to monitor their effectiveness. AIA will work collaboratively with all levels of government to ensure they are adopted and followed.

AIA will support collaborative and continuing education to achieve safe school design.—The AIA will continue to engage in activities to better inform its members and leaders in the community of the many design options and avenues available for school officials to access. AIA will aggregate and disseminate school safety best practices by engaging its members, Knowledge Communities, and chapters across the country. AIA will conduct grassroots efforts to educate State and local government officials on the importance of implementing safe school design in their communities.

AIA will strive to make safe school design eligible for Federal grants.—AIA will spearhead the formation of a multi-stakeholder coalition to support a bipartisan effort that makes architectural and design services for schools an allowable use of funds within existing Federal funding and grants.

AIA will establish a Federal clearinghouse on school design.—AIA is pursuing Federal public policy to establish a repository of architectural and design resources that is accessible by educational officials, architects and other design professionals to inform the design of safe, productive learning environments.

Much of the public debate about school safety has focused on access to firearms and mental health services. Neither approach to solving school violence has progressed much over many years despite all-too-frequent tragedies. Architects can improve school safety through the power of design now.

By design, innovative learning environments address the need for contemporary learners to work peacefully, collaboratively, and safely. To design and build the new schools we need and to retrofit existing schools requires significant support and resources that go beyond just the architecture, engineering, and construction communities. The AIA urgently calls on all policy makers and stakeholders to work with

school communities to safeguard students and teachers while keeping schools positive places of learning and growth.

JOINT LETTER FROM THE DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN AND NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATIONAL FUND, INC.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, & Recovery, U.S. House of Representatives, H2–176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

RE: Letter for the Record for the September 26, 2019, Hearing of the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, & Recovery, "Engaging the Community: Perspectives on School Security"

DEAR CHAIRMAN PAYNE, RANKING MEMBER KING AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS: On behalf of the Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC) and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), we encourage the Subcommittee, and all Members of Congress, to focus on providing students with positive supports that maintain safe, healthy, and inclusive schools and to avoid the use of any Federal resources on hardening schools, which does not make students safer and contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline for historically marginalized students.

DSC is a coalition of over 100 grassroots and education advocacy organizations in 28 States. Since its inception in 2006, DSC members have worked to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline by advocating for educational environments that keep students in school and learning. DSC has challenged the systemic use of exclusionary discipline practices that disproportionately impact students of color, students with disabilities, and students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ), which the Department of Education's (ED's) most recent civil rights data and other national research verifies.[1]

Founded in 1940 by Thurgood Marshall, LDF is the nation's oldest civil rights law organization. For almost 80 years, LDF has relied on the Constitution and Federal and State civil rights laws to pursue equality and justice for African Americans and other people of color. Since the historic U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education,*[2] which LDF litigated and won, we have continued to represent students of color to ensure they receive quality and equitable educational opportunities[3] and are not subject to racially-biased school practices and policies.[4]

DSC's and LDF's recent joint national advocacy efforts have included releasing a toolkit for school communities on how to engage in the implementation of State plans under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),[5] including the promotion of effective strategies for reducing these persistent racial disparities in school discipline and providing meaningful supports to school districts to reduce the overuse of exclusionary discipline; and re-releasing a brief on why increasing the police presence in schools would lead to further disparities for students of color.[6]

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[1] U.S. Dep't of Education, 2015–2016 Civil Rights Data Collection: School Climate and Safety (April 2018), *https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/school-climate-and-safety.pdf.* See also, Hilary Burdge, Adela C. Licona & Zemi T. Hyemingway, LGBTQ Youth of Color: Discipline Disparities, School Push-out, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline 2, *https://gsanetwork.org/files/aboutus/LGBTQ_brief_FINAL-web.pdf* ("Research shows that LGBTQ youth of color in particular face persistent and frequent harassment and bias-based bullying form peers and school staff as well as increased surveillance and policing, relatively greater incidents of harsh school discipline, and consistent blame for their own victimization.").

[2] 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

[3] See, e.g., *Thomas, et al.* v. *St. Martin Parish Sch. Dist., et al.,* Civil Action No. 6:65–cv–11314, Doc. 178 (W.D. La., Jan. 25, 2016) (approving plan to integrate the district & ensure Black students equal access to educ. opportunities), available at *http://www.naacpldf.org/update/ldf-announces-consent-decree-thomas-v-school-board-st-martin-;* Br. for Black Student Alliance at Univ. of Tex. at Austin, Black Ex-Students of Tex., & LDF as Amici Curiae, *Fisher* v. *Univ. of Tex. at Austin,* 2015 WL 6690039 (Nov. 2, 2015), available at *http://www.naacpldf.org/files/case_issue/14-981%20bsac%20The%20Black%20Student%20Alliance%20at%20the%20University%20of%20Texas%20at%20Austin%20et%20al._1_1.pdf.*

[4] See Complaint from LDF & Nat'l Ctr. for Youth Law to U.S. Dep't of Educ. Office for Civil Rights (hereinafter OCR) against Bryan Indep. Sch. Dist. (Feb. 20, 2013), available at *http://www.naacpldf.org/files/case_issue/Bryan%20ISD%20OCR%20Complaint.pdf.*

[5] Dignity in Schools, Engage for Equity: A Toolkit for School Communities on the Every Student Succeeds Act, *http://dignityinschools.org/resources/engageforequity.*

[6] Dignity in Schools, Police in Schools are Not the Answer to School Shootings, *http://dignityinschools.org/resources/police-in-schools-are-not-the-answer-to-school-shootings/.*

Research and experience show that increasing school safety hinges on creating a positive school climate where students feel welcome and safe.[7] Efforts to harden schools both undermine efforts to improve school climate and pose a particular problem for students of color and students with disabilities, increasing the risk that they will enter the school-to-prison pipeline.

For example, there is no evidence to show that the assignment of law enforcement officers to schools makes students safer. However, law enforcement officers placed in schools too often engage in routine disciplinary matters best left to educators. Students who attend schools where a school resource officer is present are more likely to be referred to law enforcement for typical childhood behaviors that previously would have been handled by educators using developmentally appropriate, pedagogically sound interventions.[8] For example, police have arrested students, some as young as 5 years old, for throwing a tantrum, texting, passing gas, violating the school dress code, arriving late, bringing a cell phone to school, or having a nonviolent verbal disagreement with a schoolmate.[9] Just last week, 2 6-year-olds were arrested at school in Florida, one for kicking someone and the other for an unspecified misdemeanor, with all charges having since been dropped.[10]

These are unfortunately not isolated incidents. In Florida, for example, during the 2010–11 school year, assigning police to schools led to 16,377 referrals of students to the juvenile justice system—an astounding 45 students each day.[11] Two-thirds of these referrals were for misdemeanors such as disruption of a school function, disorderly conduct, or minor scuffles with schoolmates.[12] This criminalization of developmentally appropriate childhood misbehavior has dire consequences. Turning police into school disciplinarians increases student anxiety, creates alienation and distrust, diminishes students' faith in the legitimacy of the authority of school staff, and can trigger, rather than prevent, misbehavior.[13] Harsh disciplinary practices, such as school-based arrests, increase the risk that students will fail a grade, drop out of school, and become entangled in the criminal justice system.[14]

Furthermore, law enforcement officers placed in schools too often discipline, arrest, and assault Black children at a higher rate than their White peers,[15] violating Federal law prohibiting discrimination based on race. Although Black and Latinx students do not misbehave more than White students,[16] they make up over 58 per-

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[7] Steinberg, Matthew, Elaine Allensworth, and David Johnson. Student and Teacher Safety in Chicago Public Schools. Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2011, available at: *https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/student-and-teacher-safety-chicago-public-schools-roles-community-context-and-school*.

[8] Jason Nance, *Students, Police, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline,* U. of Fla. Levin College of L., 2016, available at *http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract__id=2577333.*

[9] Id.

[10] Allyson Chiu, Florida officer fired for 'traumatic' arrests of two 6-year-old students at school, Wash. Post, Sep. 24, 2019, *https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/09/23/girl-tantrum-orlando-classroom-arrested-battery-school-investigation/*.

[11] Fla. Dep't of Juv. Just., *Delinquency in Florida's Schools: A Seven Year Study* 3 (Nov. 2011), available at *http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/research2/2010-11-delinquency-in-schools-analysis.pdf?sfvrsn=0.*

[12] ACLU of Fla., Advancement Project, & Fla. St. Conf. of the NAACP, *Still Haven't Shut Down the School-to-Prison Pipeline* 6–8 (Mar. 2011), available at *http://b.3cdn.net/advancement/be89ef01bcb350c7fc__z5m6btbgo.pdf.*

[13] Philip J. Cook, et al., *School Crime Control and Prevention,* 39 CRIME & JUST. 313, 372 (2010). *Accord* Matthew J. Meyer et al., *A Structural Analysis of School Violence and Disruption: Implications for Creating Safer Schools,* 22 EDUC. & TREATMENT OF CHILD. 333, 352 (1999); Randall R. Beger, *The Worst of Both Worlds,* 28 CRIM. JUST. REV. 336, 340 (2003); Kathleen Nolan, POLICE IN THE HALLWAYS: DISCIPLINE IN AN URBAN HIGH SCHOOL 53 (2011).

[14] Russell Skiba et al., *Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? A Report by the American Psychological Association Task Force* (2006), available at *http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/zero-tolerance-report.pdf;* Tony Fabelo et al., *Breaking Schools' Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students' Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement* (2011); Centers for Disease Control, *Health Risk Behaviors Among Adolescents Who Do and Do Not Attend School—United States, 1992,* 43 MORBIDITY & MORTALITY WEEKLY REP. 129 (1994). See also Robert Balfanz et al., *Sent Home and Put Off-Track: The Antecedents, Disproportionalities, and Consequences of Being Suspended in the Ninth Grade* (Dec. 2012) (Paper prepared for the Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice national conference in Washington, DC, Jan. 10, 2013) (finding that students who were suspended even 1 time in ninth grade were twice as likely to drop out).

[15] See Ajmel Quereshi et al., *Locked Out of the Classroom: How Implicit Bias Contributes to Disparities in School Discipline,* NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE & EDUCATIONAL FUND, INC., 2017, available at http://www.naacpldf.org/files/about-us/Bias__*Reportv2017__30__11__FINAL.pdf.*

[16] Russell J. Skiba, et al., *Are Black Kids Worse? Myths and Facts About Racial Differences in Behavior: A Summary of the Literature,* Indiana U., Mar. 2014, available at *http://*

cent of school-based arrests, but only 40 percent of public school enrollment.[17] Black students are more than twice as likely as their White peers to be referred to law enforcement or arrested at school.[18] The presence of police in schools makes Black students and students who have been victims feel less safe,[19] which negatively affects school climate. The prohibition of the assignment of law enforcement officers to school would positively impact school safety by creating a more positive school climate and therefore contributing to a welcoming environment conducive to learning for students, particularly those of color.

These consequences are not limited to increasing law enforcement presence. Many recent efforts to address school safety concerns have included the use of technology like facial recognition software,[20] increased use of threat assessments,[21] and increased data sharing with law enforcement.[22] These and other similar recommendations that rely upon the use of data and technology are often presented as transparent and objective innovations, but they each come with serious civil rights concerns. Where schools do implement threat assessments and data sharing, they must also ensure that proper due process and privacy protections are implemented to guard against subjecting innocent students to false and malicious allegations of wrongdoing without any recourse.[23] In addition, protections should be in place, including a robust system of feedback and review, to ensure that these systems are not having a disparate impact on students of color or other groups at risk of being targeted. Even well-meaning students or staff who unknowingly hold implicit biases against students of color[24] may act on those biases by reporting those students as a threat. For guidance on how to implement threat assessment teams to address these concerns, please see the enclosed upcoming chapter from DSC's Model School Code,[25] entitled "Using an Intervention Support Team Model to Conduct "Threat Assessments."[26] Facial recognition software should not be used at all, as it has been shown to be inaccurate in identifying Black faces, darker-skinned women, and chil-

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www.indiana.edu/?atlantic/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/African-American-Differential-Behavior_031214.pdf.

[17] Education Week Research Center original analysis of Civil Rights Data Collection, 2017, available at *https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/01/27/511428075/does-your-school-arrest-students.*

[18] 2013–2014 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), *A First Look: Key Data Highlights on Equity and Opportunity Gaps in Our Nation's Public Schools,* U.S. DEP'T OF EDUC. OFFICE FOR CIV. RTS (June 7, 2016).

[19] Matthew T. Theriot et al., *School Resource Officers and Students' Feelings of Safety at School,* 14 YOUTH VIOLENCE & JUV. JUST. 2, 130–146 (Dec. 2014), abstract available at *http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1541204014564472.*

[20] See, e.g., Issie Lapowsky, *Schools Can Now Get Facial Recognition Tech for Free. Should They?,* WIRED, Jul. 17, 2018; Ava Kofman, *Face Recognition Is Now Being Used in Schools, but It Won't Stop Mass Shootings,* THE INTERCEPT, May 30, 2018.

[21] See, e.g., FINAL REPORT OF THE FEDERAL COMMISSION ON SCHOOL SAFETY, Ch. 5, Dec. 18, 2018, available at *https://www2.ed.gov/documents/school-safety/school-safety-report.pdf.*

[22] See, e.g., Benjamin Herold, *To Stop School Shootings, Fla. Will Merge Government Data, Social Media Posts,* EDWEEK, Jul. 26, 2018.

[23] U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Dep't of Educ., *Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates* (July 2004).

[24] See, e.g., Philip A. Goff, et al., *The Essence of Innocence: Consequences of Dehumanizing Black Children,* 106 J. OF PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. 526 (2014), available at *https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/psp-a0035663.pdf;* Rebecca Epstein, et al., *Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls' Childhood,* CTR. ON POVERTY & INEQUALITY AT GEO. L. SCH. (Aug. 14, 2017), available at *https://www.law.georgetown.edu/poverty-inequality-center/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2017/08/girlhood-interrupted.pdf;* John Paul Wilson, et al., *Racial Bias in Judgments of Physical Size and Formidability: From Size to Threat,* 113 J. OF PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. 59 (2017), available at *http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/psp-pspi0000092.pdf;* Walter S. Gilliam, et al., *Do Early Educators' Implicit Biases Regarding Sex & Race Relate to Behavior Expectations & Recommendations of Preschool Expulsions & Suspensions?,* YALE U. CHILD STUDY CTR. (Sep. 28, 2016), available at *http://ziglercenter.yale.edu/publications/Preschool%20Implicit%20Bias%20Policy%20Brief_final_-9_26_276766_5379_v1.pdf;* Tony Favro, *Discipline and civil rights in American State schools,* CITY MAYORS, Nov. 22, 2011, available at *http://www.citymayors.com/education/usa-school-discipline.html;* Wesley Wright, *Fear of black students, unfair treatment rampant in Denver schools, black educators say,* CHALKBEAT, Aug. 5, 2016, available at *https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/co/2016/08/05/fear-of-black-students-unfair-treatment-rampant-in-denver-schools-black-educators-say/.*

[25] You can find the full Model Code at *http://dignityinschools.org/take-action/model-school-code/.*

[26] This chapter is not yet finalized, so there may be slight differences between the version attached and the soon-to-be-released final version.

dren and has been found to be completely ineffective in making schools safer.[27] Additional measures like arming school staff, adding metal detectors, and other efforts to "harden" schools have not been found to increase school safety, but will unfairly negatively impact students of color.

For these reasons, DSC and LDF encourage the subcommittee to work to prohibit the use of Federal resources to support efforts to "harden" schools as such efforts actually render students less safe. The subcommittee should also work to provide more resources to schools and districts to both protect students' rights and promote positive school climates, including increasing the number of school counselors and social workers, as well as access to evidence-based and promising programs like Restorative Practices, Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports[28] and trauma-informed care.[29] For additional information and guidance on effective methods for supporting student safety and positive school climates, please see the Civil Rights Principles for Safe, Healthy, and Inclusive School Climates[30] recently released by the Leadership Conference Education Fund. These measures get to the root of problems students are facing and proactively create safer environments for everyone in the school community.

Thank you for considering this letter. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Natalie Chap [.] or Nicole Dooley [.]

Sincerely,

NATALIE CHAP,
Campaign Coordinator, Dignity in Schools Campaign.

NICOLE DOOLEY,
Senior Policy Counsel, NAACP LDF.

Encl: Dignity in Schools Campaign, "Using an Intervention Support Team Model to Conduct "Threat Assessments."

LETTER FROM EVERYTOWN FOR GUN SAFETY

September 24, 2019.

Representative DONALD PAYNE, JR.,
Chairman, Emergency Preparedness, Response, & Recovery Subcommittee of the House Committee on Homeland Security, H2–176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

Representative PETER KING,
Ranking Member, Emergency Preparedness, Response, & Recovery Subcommittee of the House Committee on Homeland Security, H2–176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN PAYNE AND RANKING MEMBER KING: Everytown for Gun Safety, the largest gun violence prevention organization in the country, submits this letter in advance of the Emergency Preparedness, Response, & Recovery Subcommittee of the House Committee on Homeland Security hearing titled Engaging the Community: Perspectives on School Security. Earlier this year, Everytown released a report in collaboration with the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers that goes into detail on the data on school gun violence and proposes a comprehensive set of proven effective solutions to strengthen schools' ability to intervene effectively when a student is at risk, increase physical security and preparedness, and address student access to firearms. The recommended school reforms are essential, including programs establishing evidence-based threat assessment teams, but it is without a doubt that strong gun safety laws are a critical component of any comprehensive plan to address school safety.

The data shows that targeted school violence is overwhelmingly committed by students. From 1966 to 2016, nearly 79 percent of active shootings in schools throughout the United States were committed by a current student or recent graduate of the school.[1] Research by the U.S. Secret Service on targeted school violence shows

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[27] See Ava Kofman, *Face Recognition Is Now Being Used in Schools, but It Won't Stop Mass Shootings,* THE INTERCEPT, May 30, 2018.

[28] See Jenni Owen, et al., *Instead of Suspension: Alternative Strategies for Effective School Discipline,* Duke Center for Child and Family and Policy, 2015, available at *https://law.duke.edu/childedlaw/schooldiscipline/downloads/instead_of_suspension.pdf.*

[29] See Katy O'Grady, *Transforming Schools with Trauma-Informed Care, ASCA SCHOOL COUNSELOR, Jan. 2017, available at https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/ASCAU/Trauma-Crisis-Management-Specialist/TransformingSchools.pdf.*

[30] Available at *http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/education/School-Climate-Principles.pdf.*

[1] The New York Police Department specifically analyzed active-shooter incidents from 1966–2016. Analysis finds that 79 percent of active shootings in schools involved shooters who were

that in 93 percent of cases there were behavioral warning signs that caused others to be concerned, and in 81 percent of incidents, other people, most often peers, had knowledge about the shooter's plans.[2] These are critical moments when a school must have a program to intervene to stop students at risk from harming themselves or others. The U.S. Secret Service released a report providing guidance on how to develop an evidence-based threat assessment program, which includes addressing students' access to guns.[3]

The guns used in targeted school violence follow a pattern: Most mass shooters obtain their guns from family or friends. Studies show that in 68 to 80 percent of incidents, shooters obtain their guns from home, their relative's home or from friends.[4] There have been many "comprehensive" school safety plans proposed over the last 20 years. Few have effectively and thoroughly addressed the issue common in all school shootings: Easy access to guns by those at risk of committing harm. Everytown strongly urges the Committee to support three targeted gun safety policies that are proven effective interventions to prevent students from accessing firearms.

First, when family or law enforcement is made aware that a student or another person is a risk to themselves or others, and that the person has access to guns, they need the ability to go to court and ask a judge for a civil restraining order. These extreme risk protection orders, or ERPOs, can be issued only after a specific legal determination is made that a person poses a threat to him or herself or others. An essential component of the law allows courts to take immediate action if the evidence shows that the threat is imminent. These laws also contain significant due process protections to ensure that a person's rights are balanced with public safety. There is strong evidence that extreme risk laws can prevent acts of violence before they happen.

- In Maryland, Montgomery County Sheriff Darren Popkin testified that a recently passed ERPO law has been invoked in at least 4 cases involving "significant threats" against schools.[5]
- In Florida, an ERPO law passed in 2018 has been invoked in multiple cases of potential school violence, including in the case of a student who was accused of stalking an ex-girlfriend and threatening to kill himself,[6] and in another in which a potential school shooter said killing 29 people would be "fun and addicting."[7]

The Federal Commission on School Safety recently endorsed ERPOs as an effective tool to prevent school gun violence, and during his confirmation hearing before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, now-U.S. Attorney General William Barr said that ERPOs were "the single most important thing we can do in the gun control area to stop these mass shootings from happening in the first place." The Senate Judiciary Committee recently held a hearing where there was bipartisan agreement that ERPOs are important tools to prevent gun violence. Twelve States, including Florida, and Washington, DC have passed ERPO laws since the Parkland shooting; 5 of them were signed by Republican Governors.[8] In all, 17 States and the District

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under 18; and were a current student or recent graduate of the school. New York City Police Department. Active shooters: *Recommendation and analysis for risk mitigation.* 2016. *https://on.nyc.gov/2GlEbI1.*

[2] United States Secret Service and United States Department of Education. The final report and findings of the safe school initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States. *https://bit.ly/2oFpIwa.* Published May 2002.

[3] National Threat Assessment Center. Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence. United States Secret Service and U.S. Department of Homeland Security. *https://bit.ly/2NKlwqD.* Published July 2018.

[4] United States Secret Service and United States Department of Education. The final report and findings of the safe school initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States. *https://bit.ly/2oFpIwa.* Published May 2002; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Source of firearms used by students in school-associated violent deaths, United States, 1992–1999. *MMWR Weekly.* 2003; 52(09):169–172; Woodrow Cox J, Rich S. 'The gun's not in the closet.' *The Washington Post.* August 1, 2018. *https://wapo.st/2TyDnTW.*

[5] Broadwater L. Sheriff: Maryland's 'red flag' law prompted gun seizures after 4 'significant threats' against schools. The Baltimore Sun. January 15, 2019. *https://bit.ly/2Gdf6Qi*

[6] Kennedy E. Tate student's AR–15, father's 54 guns removed under new red flag law. Pensacola News Journal. July 9, 2018. *https://bit.ly/2UHmaba.*

[7] Lipscomb J. Florida's post-Parkland "Red Flag" law has taken guns from dozens of dangerous people. Miami New Times. August 7, 2018. *https://bit.ly/2ORW56U.*

[8] CO, DE, FL, HI, IL, MA, MD, NV, NY, NJ, RI, VT. Republican Governors signed bills in FL, IL, MA, MD, VT.

of Columbia now have strong ERPO laws on the books.[9] This tool needs to be available in every State and schools, families, and law enforcement need to be aware of how to use it.

Second, we should encourage responsible firearm storage through legislative change and awareness campaigns. The most common source of guns used in school shootings is from the shooter's home, the homes of friends, or the homes of relatives. This is unsurprising, since nearly 4.6 million American children live in homes with at least one gun that is loaded and unlocked.[10] Responsible firearm storage laws, often known as child access prevention laws, require that people store firearms responsibly when they are not in their possession in order to prevent unauthorized access. Under these laws generally, if and when a person accesses a firearm and does harm with it, the person who failed to adequately store the firearm is liable. In addition to enacting responsible storage laws, policy makers should encourage a culture of responsible gun storage by increasing awareness of responsible storage practices. Storing household guns locked, unloaded, or separate from the ammunition is associated with reductions in the risk of self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and teenagers—up to 85 percent depending on the type of storage practice.[11] For years, Moms Demand Action, the grassroots arm of Everytown for Gun Safety, has run a public safety program called Be SMART. This PTA-endorsed program focuses on fostering conversations about responsible storage among parents and children to help facilitate behavior change and address unauthorized access to guns, including the hundreds of unintentional shootings committed and experienced by children every year.

Third, background checks are a key foundation to enforcing our gun laws and are an effective tool for keeping guns out of the hands of people with dangerous histories. A 2019 analysis found that States with laws requiring background checks for all gun sales have homicide rates 10 percent lower than States without them.[12] As part of a comprehensive plan to prevent gun violence in schools, the Federal Government must act to require background checks on all gun sales so that shooters cannot easily purchase firearms. Current Federal law requires that background checks be conducted whenever a person attempts to purchase a firearm from a licensed gun dealer, however, current Federal law does not require background checks on sales between unlicensed parties. This means that people with dangerous histories can easily circumvent the background check system simply by purchasing their firearms on-line or at a gun show. A recent Everytown investigation showed that as many as 1 in 9 people arranging to buy a firearm on Armslist.com, the Nation's largest on-line gun marketplace, would fail a background check, including because they are minors under 18.[13] Among the prospective Amslist.com gun buyers in Florida in 2018, 1 in 10 were under 21 years old and not eligible to purchase firearms under State law solely because of their age.[14] And yet without background checks required on those sales, those individuals may have been able to get armed illegally and with no background check.

Finally, one solution that has not been proven effective and places schools at risk is authorizing teachers and school staff to carry firearms in schools. Arming teachers puts our children at greater risk and does nothing to stop active shooters or other forms of school gun violence. While the desire for action is understandable, the notion of a well-trained teacher acting as a last line of defense is not based on experience or research. Law enforcement, those we charge with protecting our schools, strongly oppose arming teachers. The National Association of School Re-

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[9] The 17 States are: CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, HI, IL, IN, MA, MD, NV, NJ, NY, OR, RI, VT, WA.

[10] Azrael D, Cohen J, Salhi C, Miller M. Firearm storage in gun-owning households with children: Results of a 2015 national survey. Journal of Urban Health. 2018; 95(3): 295–304. Study defined children as under the age of 18.

[11] Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun storage practices and risk of youth suicide and unintentional firearm injuries. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2005; 293(6)707–714.

[12] Siegel M, Boine C. What are the most effective policies inreducing firearm homicides? Rockefeller Government Institute. 2019.

[13] Everytown for Gun Safety. UNCHECKED: OVER 1 MILLION ONLINE FIREARM ADS, NO BACKGROUND CHECKS REQUIRED. *https://everytownresearch.org/unchecked/*. February 2019.

[14] Everytown investigators posted advertisements for firearms for sale in Florida. Investigators did not possess any of the firearms being listed for sale nor did they complete any transactions as part of this investigation. Investigators then conducted telephone, text, or email communications with prospective buyers and verified the identity of 111 individuals in Florida looking to purchase a firearm. By conducting searches of publicly available records, investigators were able to determine that 11 of these prospective buyers in Florida were under the age of 21 and prohibited from purchasing a gun in Florida solely due to their age.

source Officers and the president and chief executive officer of the Major Cities Police Chiefs Association have all indicated their opposition to arming teachers. Law enforcement personnel who carry guns on a daily basis receive hundreds of hours of initial training and are generally required to continue their training throughout their careers.[15] In the States that have laws that are designed to allow for armed school personnel, those armed personnel receive significantly less training than law enforcement. The laws vary widely, but not a single State requires teachers or school staff to undergo training that is akin to that completed by a full-time law enforcement officer. The simple fact is that greater access to firearms is strongly correlated with additional risk. When more guns are placed into schools, children will be more likely to access them.

Everytown commends this subcommittee for taking up this important issue, and strongly urges Members to focus on strengthening gun safety laws as part of a comprehensive solution to keeping schools safe from gun violence.

Sincerely,

ROBERT B. WILCOX, JR.,
Deputy Director of Policy and Strategy, Everytown for Gun Safety.

LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

The Honorable DONALD PAYNE,
Chairman, U.S. House Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, & Recovery, H2–176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

The Honorable PETER KING,
Ranking Member, U.S. House Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, & Recovery, H2–176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN AND RANKING MEMBER: Thank you for holding this important hearing to discuss the best practices for enhancing school safety and security. On behalf of the 25,000 members of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), we know first-hand that schools play a critical and irreplaceable role in keeping students safe and supporting their mental health. While schools remain one of the safest places for children, we cannot ignore the fact that acts of violence do occur on our school campuses, in addition to those that our students experience on the way to and from school and in their communities. This can include bullying, harassment, fighting, assault, and gun violence. Data from the Naval Postgraduate School's K–12 School Shooting database shows that 2018 was the worst year on record for school shootings and gun-related incidents. The *Washington Post* reported that more than 226,000 children have been exposed to gun violence at schools since Columbine.[1] This reality in our country is completely unacceptable. Of all developed countries, the United States is the only Nation that continues to experience gun violence on a daily and pervasive basis.

As Congress explores solutions to prevent school violence, it is imperative that we stay focused on facts and on what we know works. NASP urges Congress to focus on comprehensive efforts to improve school safety—a balance of physical and psychological safety measures that address all aspects of school safety; not just incidents of mass violence. Creating safe and supportive schools requires a team effort. We know that, together, we can create successful schools that prevent violence by simultaneously employing reasonable physical security measures, maintaining appropriate crisis preparedness and response teams and plans, and ensuring positive school climates in which students' academic, social—emotional, and mental and behavioral health needs are met. In all of these efforts, school psychologists play a critical role.

In 2012, NASP—in collaboration with the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of School Resource Officers, the American School Counselor Association, and School Social Work Association of America—released a Framework for Safe and Successful Schools (attached). This resource outlines best practice and policy recommendations that we know improve school safety. In 2018, the author organizations, along with the National PTA, released Considerations and Action Steps

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[15] The average number of initial training hours that a law enforcement officer receives at a basic training academy is 840. Reaves BA. State and local law enforcement training academies, 2013. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *https://bit.ly/2pg0whI.* Published July 2016.

[1] Valerie Strauss, "Study: There's no evidence that hardening schools actually works" (April 26, 2019) available at: *https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/04/16/study-theres-no-evidence-that-hardening-schools-make-kids-safer-gun-violence-actually works/.*

for implementing the Framework for Safe and Successful Schools (attached). This document builds on the recommendations outlined in the Framework and gives school leaders concrete steps they can take to improve school safety. We urge Congress to seriously consider these policy recommendations, which include the following:

- *Schools must implement safety initiatives that balance psychological and physical safety*.—Effective school safety efforts should utilize evidence-based practices to ensure the well-being of all students in addition to their physical safety. Reasonable building measures, such as secure entrances and exits, lighted and monitored hallways, and check in-check out systems for visitors, are important. However, an overemphasis on extreme physical security measures alone, such as metal detectors and arming school staff, has either no effect or arguably negative effects on school safety.[2] Such measures may, in fact, undermine student perceptions of safety and schools' ability to ensure an effective learning environment. Multiple studies have found no evidence that any pattern of visible security had beneficial effects on academic outcomes, and heavy surveillance was modestly associated with detrimental effects on academic outcomes.[3] This is particularly true for low-income, inner-city schools or schools who serve racial and ethnic minority students.

  We must balance physical and psychological safety by taking reasonable security measures while also engaging in a sustained district- and building-level commitment to foster a welcoming and supportive learning environment. It's especially important to note that arming teachers is not the answer. Doing so places an unrealistic, unreasonable burden on America's educators, has the potential to cause more harm from unintentional or inaccurate discharge of firearms, and can undermine the sense of safe, supportive learning environments. The *Heller* v. *District of Columbia* case reinforced that there are "sensitive spaces" where gun prohibition is perfectly acceptable—including schools. Our Nation must focus on the approaches that genuinely safeguard the well-being of our children and of the school staff who work to educate, empower, and protect them every day. Allowing anyone other than a commissioned law enforcement officer to carry a gun at a school is not one of these approaches.
- *Increase access to comprehensive mental and behavioral health services and supports in schools*.—Only a fraction of youth in need of mental health services actually receive them, and among those that do, the majority receive care in school. Schools are an ideal place both to promote mental wellness and to identify and support students struggling with mental health issues. In these cases, collaboration among school staff members, community members, students, and their families is essential to ensuring that children receive care and effective interventions.

  We must stress that the vast majority of people with mental illness are not violent; in fact, individuals with mental illness are more likely to be victims of violence. To conclude that the presence of an issue like depression predisposes someone to commit a violent crime perpetuates an incorrect stereotype and maintains a stigma that often creates a reluctance to seek treatment. Instead we must reduce stigma, improve access to mental health services in schools, and continue efforts to build strong relationships and connections at school. These are critical factors in preventing harm and interrupting individuals' pathways toward violence. These efforts also allow for effective responses to violent acts directed at schools, and providing effective crisis response following exposure to trauma.

  Importantly, in order to more effectively meet the mental, behavioral, and social-emotional health needs of students—to address the needs of the whole child—we must increase the number of school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers. There is currently a critical shortage of these professionals, who are trained to guide school-wide prevention and intervention, provide direct services to students in need of support, help teachers and other school staff understand the warning signs that individuals may be at risk of causing harm to themselves or others, provide appropriate threat and suicide assessments and supports to identified students, and provide crisis response and recovery mental health supports.
- *Create welcoming, supportive learning environments*.—Students need to feel connected and included in their school communities. It is critical to enhance school

[2] Addington, L, *The Use of Visible Security Measures in Public Schools: A Review to Summarize Current Literature and Guide Future Research* (2018).

[3] Fisher, Benjamin W. & Tanner-Smith, Emily E, *Visible Security Measures and Student Academic Performance, Attendance, and Postsecondary Aspirations* (2016).

connectedness and trust between students and adults, as well as to reinforce open communication and the importance of reporting concerns about someone potentially hurting themselves or others. A key component of a welcoming and supportive environment is the use of effective, positive discipline strategies that focus on teaching and reinforcing positive behavior, preventing and addressing negative behavior, and keeping students in school rather than pushing them out. Overly punitive discipline strategies, like zero-tolerance policies, do not improve school safety. Overreliance on suspension and expulsion contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline. Furthermore, students who are suspended or expelled are at increased risk of dropping out, substance abuse, and other risky behaviors that could lead to involvement in the criminal justice system. Schools can and should address negative behavior and connect students to the necessary supports needed to be successful, rather than pushing them out.

- *Establish trained school safety and crisis teams*.—Schools and districts need trained school safety and crisis teams and plans that are consistently reviewed and practiced. Training should encompass on-going prevention and early intervention as well as response and recovery in the event the unpreventable occurs. This includes conducting effective lockdown drills, collaborative planning with community responders, and training school mental health professionals with skills and techniques to support psychological recovery. A primary goal should be to reinforce learning as well as safety.
- *Enact and uphold gun laws that prevent access to firearms by those who have the potential to cause harm to themselves or others*.—NASP supports measures that will reduce access to firearms by individuals who intend to harm themselves or others and are in line with existing public safety measures designed to protect American citizens. This includes eliminating inappropriate youth access to guns; reinstating the Federal assault weapons ban; keeping guns out of the hands of individuals deemed at risk of hurting themselves and others; improving awareness of safe gun practices, including secure storage of firearms; and funding public health research on gun violence. We will not solve the issue of school and community violence by making weapons more accessible or increasing their presence in our schools. Instead, we must do everything we can to keep weapons out of the hands of those who intend to harm others.

The truth is that no amount of investment in physical security can guarantee absolute protection from gun violence, and while hardening schools with visible security measures initially may alleviate student and parent fears and make the community aware that schools are taking action, these measures have not been proven to decrease acts of violence in schools. The education sector of the market for security equipment services reached $2.7 billion in revenue in 2017[4]—but a recent study by researchers at the University of Toledo and Ball State University found that there were no physical security practices with evidence indicating they had reduced such violence.[5] This is why addressing the shortage and increasing access to school-employed mental health professionals is absolutely critical to tackling this difficult issue. These professionals provide valuable expertise on creating healthy school environments—free of bullying, harassment, and discrimination—where students are comfortable and able to get the support they need and adults are able to recognize a student in crisis.

In order to make our schools safer, we must do more to address the underlying causes of violence. This means enacting legislation that will balance physical and psychological safety, increase access to comprehensive mental and behavioral health services in schools, and uphold meaningful gun safety regulations that will reduce inappropriate access to weapons. As Congress proposes legislation to curb acts of violence in schools, it is absolutely imperative that these efforts are grounded in research and best practice. If you have any questions or would like to follow up, please contact me [.]

Sincerely,

KATHLEEN MINKE, PHD, NCSP
Executive Director, National Association of School Psychologists.

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[4] "School security systems industry—US market overview (February 26, 2018) available at *https://technology.ihs.com/600401/school-security-systems-industry-us-market-overview*.

[5] Khubchandani, Jagdish and Price, James, *School Firearm Violence Prevention Practices and Policies: Functional or Folly?* (June 2019).

ATTACHMENT.—A FRAMEWORK FOR SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS*

ATTACHMENT.—POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE FRAMEWORK FOR SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

Implementing the Framework for Safe and Successful Schools[1] requires policies and practices that support on-going efforts to establish comprehensive school safety programming. Following are policy and practice recommendations to consider when developing your action plan. Some recommendations may appear in multiple sections.

Integration of Services and Initiatives

- Provide on-going, high-quality, relevant, and job-embedded professional development to all school staff.
- Encourage the use of professional learning communities or other structured avenues to foster collaboration among school staff.
- Ensure that district and school building teams have representation of diverse stakeholders, including principals, teachers (general and special education), parents, school security professionals and school resource officers (SROs), school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school psychologists), and other specialized instructional support personnel.
- Engage in resource mapping to better understand available resources and how they are utilized through the school or district to support:
  - Instruction
  - Organization and management
  - Learning supports (e.g., mental and behavioral health services).
- Develop a process for regular examination of school initiatives to improve student outcomes.
  - Are any initiatives redundant?
  - Are all initiatives directly related to the school improvement plan?
  - Do you have staff buy-in?
- Effectively engage parents and families in school improvement and school safety efforts.

Related Resources

- *Assessing School Level and District Level Needs*
- *Ready to Learn, Empowered to Teach: Guiding Principles for Effective Schools & Successful Students*
- *Ensuring High-Quality, Comprehensive and Integrated Student Supports (NASP Position Statement)*
- *NASSP Position Statement on Safe Schools*
- *NASP Online Learning Center*
- *NASP PREPaRE Training Curriculum*
- *Leading Success Module on Safe and Healthy School Environments*

Implementation of Integrated Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

- Establish a process for universal screening for academic, behavioral, and emotional barriers to learning.
- Implement high-quality, rigorous curricula that address core academic competencies, social-emotional learning principles, mental and behavioral wellness, and positive behavior.
- Establish a process for regularly reviewing student data (both behavioral and academic).
- Require a multidisciplinary, data-based decision-making team comprised of diverse stakeholders, including principals/administrators, teachers (general and special education), parents, school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school psychologists) and other specialized instructional support personnel.
- Ensure access to a range of high-quality, evidence-based interventions to address the comprehensive needs of students.
- Build upon existing district and State initiatives related to MTSS (e.g., response to intervention and positive behavioral interventions and supports).
- Embed time for planning and problem solving into the staff master schedule.
- Explicitly include MTSS efforts in the school improvement plan.
- Braid available funding streams to scale up existing efforts.

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*The attachment has been retained in committee files and is available on-line at *www.nasponline.org/schoolsafetyframework.*

[1] Cowan, K. C., Vaillancourt, K., Rossen, E., & Pollitt, K. (2013). A framework for safe and successful schools [Brief]. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

- Embed MTSS principles into all relevant professional development.
- Leverage existing technical assistance available from State, regional, and National centers.

Related Resources

- *Leveraging Essential School Practices, ESSA, MTSS, and the NASP Practice Model: A Crosswalk to Help Every School and Student Succeed*
- *Integrated Model of Academic and Behavior Supports (NASP Position Statement)*
- *The School Counselor and MTSS*
- *ESSA and Multitiered Systems of Support*
- *ASCA specialist trainings/PD opportunities*

Access to School-Based Mental Health Supports

- Examine existing ratios of school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors.
  Work with district and State leaders to develop a long-term plan to achieve recommended ratios of each profession.
- Develop and implement a process for parents, teachers, and students to refer themselves or others for mental health support.
- Provide annual (or biannual) professional development to all school staff in mental health first aid, the appropriate referral process, suicide prevention, and other relevant mental and behavioral health topics.
  - Utilize existing school-employed mental health professionals in the development and delivery of this professional development.
  - Provide additional professional development to school-employed mental health professionals on current evidence-based practices.
- Develop policies and procedures for conducting suicide risk and threat assessments.
  - Require involvement of the school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker.
- Conduct a needs assessment to evaluate existing and needed supports.
  - Examine availability of services in all tiers (prevention/early intervention, targeted support, intensive support).
- Implement universal screening for mental and behavioral health concerns.
- Ensure availability of evidence-based mental health supports for students identified as being 'at-risk' in universal screening measures and other referral processes.
- If your school or district maintains formal partnerships with community agencies who provide mental and behavioral health, establish clear expectations for communication and collaboration among school-employed mental health professionals and community-employed providers.
- Braid available funding streams to scale up existing efforts.

Related Resources

- *NASP Practice Model Implementation Guide*
- *Mental and Behavioral Health Services for Children and Adolescents (NASP Position Statement)*
- *Shortages in School Psychology Resource Guide*
- *School Psychologists: Qualified Health Professionals Providing Child and Adolescent Mental and Behavioral Health Services (NASP White Paper)*
- *NASSP Position Statement on Mental Health*
- *The School Counselor and Student Mental Health*
- *Community Schools White Paper*
- *School-Community Alliances Enhance Mental Health Services*

Integration of School Safety and Crisis Preparedness Efforts

- Require establishment of a dedicated safety/crisis response team that includes, at a minimum, school principals/administrators, school-employed mental health professionals, school security professional/SROs, community stakeholders, parents, and other school staff as appropriate. Convene this team on a regular basis.
- Develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with school security agency/local police department with clear articulation of specific roles and responsibilities of school security personnel or the school resource officer.
- Examine existing ratios of school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors.
- Work with district and State leaders to develop a long-term plan to achieve recommended ratios of each profession.

- Develop an emergency response plan with procedures for regular review.
- Provide on-going staff development on the school safety and crisis plan that includes regularly-scheduled practice and coordination with community responders.

Related Resources

- *Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention*
- *School Violence Prevention (NASP Position Statement)*
- *NASP PREPaRE Training Curriculum*
- *NASP Online Learning Center*

Balance of Physical and Psychological Safety

- Ensure annual (at least) collection and review of school-wide climate and school safety data.
  - Data collection should include teacher, parent, and student perception of school climate and safety.
- Include explicit goals related to school climate and school safety in the school/district level improvement plan.
- Regularly examine the use and effectiveness of extreme physical security measures (e.g., metal detectors, armed security).
- Examine the use of these measures in conjunction with student perception of school safety.
- Develop and implement procedures (including anonymous reporting) for students, staff, and families to report potential threats or other concerning behaviors.
- Promote mentoring programs and other efforts to ensure that all students have a positive relationship with at least one adult.
- Develop and implement a process for parents, teachers, and students to refer themselves or others for mental health support.
- Provide annual (or biannual) professional development to all school staff—and students as appropriate—in mental health first aid, the appropriate referral process, suicide prevention, and other relevant mental and behavioral health topics.
- Ensure availability of evidence-based mental health supports for students identified as being 'at-risk' in universal screening measures and other referral processes.

Related Resources

- *School Security Measures and Their Impacts on Students (NASP Research Summary)*
- *ESSA and School Climate*
- *Best Practice Considerations for Active Shooter and Armed Assailant Drills*
- *School Safety: What Really Works*

Use of Effective Discipline Practices

- Create and communicate clear behavioral expectations for staff and students.
- Clearly articulate, and consistently enforce, consequences for inappropriate behavior.
- Routinely teach students appropriate behavior, and make sure that staff model appropriate behavior.
- Reinforce the display of appropriate behavior.
- Establish a process for regularly reviewing student discipline data (in conjunction with other available data sources).
- Require a multidisciplinary, data-based decision-making team comprised of diverse stakeholders, including principals, teachers (general and special education), parents, school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school psychologists) and other specialized instructional support personnel.
- Prohibit the use of zero tolerance policies.
- Establish enumerated antibullying and harassment policies.
- Establish procedures for responding to all reports of bullying and harassment.

Related Resources

- *Bullying Prevention and Intervention in Schools (NASP Position Statement)*
- *Corporal Punishment (NASP Position Statement)*
- *NASSP Position Statement on Corporal Punishment*
- *NASSP Position Statement on School Discipline*
- *A Framework for School-Wide Bullying Prevention and Safety*
- *Effective School-Wide Discipline*

STATEMENT OF JAMES "MO" CANADY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (NASRO)

SEPTEMBER 25, 2019

Thank you for inviting me to testify on behalf of the National Association of School Resource Officers. It is my honor to serve as the executive director for this outstanding group of law enforcement and education professionals. NASRO is a not-for-profit association founded in 1991 with a solid commitment to our Nation's youth. NASRO is comprised of school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators, and school security and safety professionals working as partners to protect students, faculty, and staff, and their school communities. The "school resource officer" (SRO) refers to a commissioned law enforcement officer selected, trained, and assigned to protect and serve an educational environment. I cannot emphasize enough how critical it is for officers to be carefully selected and specially trained to function in the school environment. This is always a factor in the success or failure of the SRO program.

The SRO program is most effective when it is built on the foundation of interagency collaboration. Through a formal memorandum of understanding between a law enforcement agency and a school district, each collaborator has a clear and properly-enforced understanding of his or her role in the school environment.

The role of the SRO should utilize the triad concept of school-based policing, in which an SRO functions in a school environment in 3 capacities: (1) As a law enforcement officer, (2) as a teacher or guest speaker, and (3) as an informal counselor or mentor. These strategies should be based on a set of well-established best practices, which NASRO has spent nearly 30 years crafting. The NASRO Board of Directors recently commissioned a group of dedicated association members to create a formal document of standards and best practices for school resource officer programs. On July 13, 2018, this important document was completed. A copy of these best practices is included with this written testimony.

These standards are organized in 4 sections, each of which encompasses an essential component of a successful SRO program.

The first section outlines administrative standards, including an outline of the definition and purpose of an SRO and recommendations for the composing of a thorough memorandum of understanding between a law enforcement agency and a school. An SRO should be a sworn, certified law enforcement officer assigned to a community-based policing program and actively working in a collaborative effort with the school district. When this definition is followed, the SRO program serves at a tremendous benefit to its school community. However, when the definition is not adhered to, the SRO program's effectiveness will, at best, be greatly hindered, and, at worst, be significantly detrimental to the school, the law enforcement agency, and the community. The No. 1 goal of any successful SRO must be to "bridge the gap" between law enforcement and youth. Positive relationships between students and SROs lay a powerful foundation for the exchange of information. These relationships, along with those the SRO builds with the school administration and with parents, can and have averted acts of school violence before a shot is ever fired.

The second section speaks to the importance of the selection process. The SRO position is a unique assignment in law enforcement, and it requires a unique officer to properly serve in it. Due to the nature of the assignment, the SRO will become one of the most well-known officers in the community. The officer selected for this position must have law enforcement experience, be of good moral character, and have a sincere willingness to work with students.

The third section outlines the essential details of an SRO's specialized training. Once the officer has been carefully selected, it is then critical that he or she be specifically trained to work in a school environment, in the triad approach. Every SRO should attend and complete NASRO's Basic SRO Course, which includes topics such as: Foundations of School-Based Policing, Understanding the Teen Brain, School Law, and Emergency Operations Plans. An SRO's training must be on-going as educational trends and school culture change and should include topics such as: Adolescent Mental Health, Threat Assessment, and Active Shooter Response.

The final section highlights the make-or-break importance of interagency collaboration between the school district and the law enforcement agency. Proper collaboration between school officials and SRO's will most definitely be effective in preserving the campus from disruptive forces while nurturing and protecting youth who are compelled to attend school. This collaboration should be formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding.

Relationship building is certainly an important factor in the success of an SRO program. The SRO must strive to build positive working relationships with the

school administration. One way of helping to build these relationships can be through the SROs role on the school safety team. Properly trained SRO's are prepared to be a member of safety teams and can also take a leadership role in helping to develop teams where none exist.

I spent nearly half of my law enforcement career in school-based policing. It was without a doubt the most rewarding period of my career. It was more than just a job. It became my life's work. I developed positive relationships with administrators, faculty members, students, and parents. I became an integral part of the Hoover City Schools District Crisis Team. By being a part of a school safety team, the SRO becomes fully engaged in crisis planning to include Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. SRO's can provide value to the written plans for a school district. They can also assist with campus site assessments as well as conducting safety drills.

The aspect of "Recovery" was not one that I had given a great deal of thought to during the early phase of my career in school-based law enforcement. It was not until the days following November 19, 2002 that it became clear to me the importance of the role that a school resource officer can play in the recovery portion of a critical incident. The unthinkable had happened at our largest high school. One student had taken the life of another in the hallway during the change of class periods.

This resulted in a very large crime scene that took some time to secure. The students had to remain in a modified lockdown for several hours. We all knew that this was putting quite a burden on teachers in particular. However, they did exactly what they were supposed to do, as they had been trained. The principal asked me to join him in a faculty meeting after the students were released. I took the opportunity to praise the staff for their good work. One of the reasons that faculty members were so well-prepared for an incident such as this, was due to the school's commitment to maintaining a solid school safety team.

I believe that this faculty meeting was actually the beginning of the recovery process. Plans were developed for the next day. We thought that our most important job on November 20 would be to keep this from happening again. To keep weapons out of the school. To make sure that no retaliation occurred. While all of those things were important, it paled in comparison to the need of the student body to be comforted and reassured. The need for trusted and caring adults became the more important issue in this recovery process. The school resource officers were certainly still focused on security but we were most definitely more engaged in the mental and emotional recovery process. The reason for this is because we were much more than just a law enforcement presence. We were trusted adults and we helped to make a difference in the lives of children during the days prior to and most definitely following November 19, 2002.

Trained and committed police officers are well-suited to effectively protect and serve the school community. School resource officers contribute by ensuring a safe and secure campus, educating students about law-related topics, and mentoring students as informal counselors and role models. Over the last 29 years, the National Association of School Resource Officers has become the world leader in school-based policing. We have trained thousands of officers based on the Triad model of school-based policing and these officers are having a positive impact on the lives of children every day.

As "The World's Leader in School Based Policing," NASRO has regularly spoken to the critical need for best practices for SRO programs. We are proud to have authored Standards and Best Practices for School Resource Officer Programs. This important document was created in the furthering of our mission to keep every school and every student safe.

STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAMS

The Standards and Best Practices presented here are separated into two classifications: Mandatory (M) and Recommended (R) to identify the importance of each Standard and Best Practice.

FORWARD

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE STANDARDS

1.1 General

This publication represents a standard for domestic and international agencies and departments. This Standards and Best Practices for the School Resource Officer Programs was developed and is maintained by the National Association of School

Resource Officers, Inc., (NASRO) a section 501(c)(3) IRC membership association established pursuant to Chapter 617 of the laws of the State of Florida.

1.2 Applicability

This document contains professional standards and recommended best practices for law enforcement agencies both within and outside of the United States, regardless of size or level of government (Federal/national, State/provincial or local).

NASRO has adopted this Standards and Best Practices for the School Resource Officer Programs and supports the need for the standards to be used as a guide for new and existing SRO units and for the best practices to be reviewed and adopted by all law enforcement, school safety agencies and school boards, as recommended.

NASRO has adopted these standards and best practices as the basis for future law enforcement certification or accreditation and supports the need for the standards to be used as a guide for all SRO law enforcement administrations and operations.

1.3 Intent

These standards and best practices are intended to provide a foundation of safe operating practices in the performance of the unit's mission and were formulated based on what has been identified as the two highest priorities of school-based law enforcement programs:

1. Safety first in all aspects of the operation.
2. Provide excellence in SRO services in support of the agency's mission.

1.4 Scope

The scope of this document is intended to encompass all aspects of SRO law enforcement and has been divided in 4 major sections: Administration, Selection, Training, and Collaboration. The subsections are intended to encompass the primary aspects of SRO law enforcement unit administration and operations.

2.0 THE MAJOR BENEFITS OF ADOPTING THESE STANDARDS

Agencies are strongly encouraged to adopt and implement the standards and best practices outlined in this publication. They have been designed as industry standards intended to foster a universal application of best practices throughout the SRO law enforcement community. Although adoption and implementation of these standards and best practices is strictly voluntary, agencies that choose to adhere to them set themselves apart from others, becoming exemplars of SRO safety and operational excellence.

2.1 Safe, Effective, and Cost-Efficient SRO Law Enforcement Operations

Compliance with these standards and best practices provides agencies with a foundation upon which a culture of safe operating practices may be formulated and establishes a mark of excellence to further develop and enhance the SRO unit's professionalism, efficiency, and overall effectiveness.

2.2 Greater Accountability with the Agency

These standards and best practices provide the respective agency chief, sheriff, or department head sound training principles, personnel qualification requirements, clearly defined lines of authority, and examples of accepted industry standards that support informed decision making and resource allocation.

2.3 Controlled Liability Insurance Costs

Compliance with these standards and best practices may allow for agencies to more easily purchase SRO law enforcement and liability insurance, increase the limit of their insurance coverage, and, in many cases, lower their insurance premiums and/or gain other financial incentives.

2.4 Stronger Support from Government Officials and the Community

By complying with these standards and best practices, agencies establish credibility as professional operations, which provide safe, cost-effective, and essential SRO support to law enforcement operations in a variety of missions.

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Limitation of Liability

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SECTION ONE | ADMINISTRATION

01.01.00	Administrative Standards	Compliance
01.01.01	**Definition** A school resource officer (SRO) is a full-time law enforcement officer with sworn law enforcement authority, trained in school-based policing and crisis response, assigned by the employing law enforcement agency to work with the school using community-oriented policing concepts.	(M)
01.01.02	**Purpose** The purpose of a successful SRO program is to "bridge the gap" between law enforcement and youth. This purpose is best accomplished by using the TRIAD model: Law Enforcement (LEO), Teacher (Guest Speaker), and Informal Counselor (Mentor). Each element of the TRIAD will be further explained throughout this document.	(R)
01.01.03	**Knowledge and Support from Agency Administration** For the SRO program to be successful, the law enforcement agency head and the superintendent of the school district must understand and fully support the SRO program, including an understanding of the standards and best practices put forth in this document.	(M)

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01.01.04

Memorandum of Understanding

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a similar contractual document should be established between the operating law enforcement agency and the school district. This document will assist in developing program goals and evaluating the program to assess the success in meeting identified goals.

Example MOU topics include but are not limited to:

- **Defining the roles and responsibilities of formal school discipline (M)**
  - SROs should not be administering formal school discipline such as detentions, suspensions, or expulsions. These decisions are the sole responsibility of the school personnel.
- **SROs act in accordance with the recommended TRIAD roles (R)**
  - As a law enforcement officer, the SRO shall abide by federal, state, and local laws.
  - As an informal counselor/mentor, the SRO may address school violations in an effort to positively impact student behavior and character and may refer students to school personnel as necessary.
  - As a teacher/classroom presenter, the SRO may address school-related education law to positively impact student behavior and character to mitigate more serious behaviors.
- **Defining roles and expectations pertaining to decision to arrest (M)**
  - According to federal law, the responsibility and decision to arrest lies solely with the SRO, respective to state law, local ordinances, and the SRO's departmental standard operating procedures or standing order.
  - The SRO's continual collaboration with school personnel and his or her understanding of each student's needs may impact the decision to arrest but the responsibility is that of the SRO alone.
- **Chain of Command (M)**
  - The SRO shall abide by the law enforcement agency's policies pertaining to the chain of command.

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- **Uniform Use (M)**
  - SROs must be clearly identified as law enforcement. The uniform apparel and law enforcement equipment shall be defined by the agency policy. If a "soft" uniform is agreed upon, the uniform should not detract from clearly identifying the SRO as law enforcement.

- **Weapons Storage (M)**
  - Normal duty gear is to be defined by the SRO's agency policies.
  - In the event additional weapons or gear is to be utilized, the storage of these items shall be defined by the law enforcement agency

- **Use of Less Lethal Tools (R)**
  - The SRO should abide by agency policies pertaining to the use of less lethal devices.
  - If there is a desired deviation from the policies, the cost, storage, and use must be agreed upon.

- **Sharing of Information (M)**
  - SROs and school personnel shall share information in accordance with their respective state laws.
  - Access and use of school camera footage, body-worn cameras, student database information, and any other information sharing practices should be defined by the MOU.

- **Documentation and Reporting Requirements (M)**
  - The SRO shall be under the immediate supervision and direction of his or her law enforcement agency.
  - The agency policies shall identify the documentation and reporting procedures to be used.
  - Any documentation requested by the school personnel shall be addressed by the MOU or similar contractual document.

- **Expenses (M)**
  - The salary (including overtime), benefits, and equipment costs should be established in the MOU and/or in an agreed upon contract between the law enforcement agency and the school district.

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- **Office Space and Office Supplies (R)**
  - A clearly defined location should be established for the SRO to conduct school and law enforcement business.
  - Due to the nature of law enforcement related to juveniles, a dedicated location with a closable door should be available.
  - Access to office supplies such as paper, a printer, computer, etc. should be addressed in the MOU.

- **Hours on Campus (M)**
  - Clearly defined expectations of the hours the SRO shall spend on campus should be agreed upon by the operating law enforcement agency and the school district.
  - Due to the nature of law enforcement, there may be a need for the SRO to be out of the building(s) for a period of time.
  - This should be understood and agreed upon by all parties involved.

- **Day-to-Day Duties (M)**
  - As formerly described, the SRO shall utilize the TRIAD model: Law Enforcement (LEO), Teacher (Guest Speaker) and Informal Counselor (Mentor).
  - Quality law enforcement practices should be assumed and agreed upon.
  - The SRO should not be assigned to specific locations or duties on a daily basis, but rather be available to assist teachers, administrators, and students when requested and as consistent with their roles as a law enforcement officer, informal counselor/mentor, and teacher/classroom presenter.
  - The expectations of the SRO's daily duties must be agreed upon by the law enforcement agency and the school district.

- **Extracurricular Activities (R)**
  - There is a demonstrated benefit to the SRO's involvement in extracurricular activities.
  - Expectations of attendance and compensation should be agreed upon by the law enforcement agency and the school district.

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SECTION TWO | SELECTION

02.01.00	The SRO Selection Process	Compliance
02.01.01	**The SRO Selection Process** • There shall be a clearly defined process of selection for the SRO to be employed. • This selection process shall be agreed upon between the agency and the school administration. • The school administration shall be involved in the selection process, including but not limited to, the interviews of SRO candidates.	(M)
02.01.02	**Experience** • It is recommended that the officer selected have at least three (3) years of law enforcement experience. • This level of experience will help the officer obtain credibility among the school faculty, students, and parents. • This level of experience will also allow the SRO to have a greater understanding of the local agency's policies and procedures.	(R)

02.01.03	**Number of SROs Selected**
	• It is recommended that each school have at least one (1) SRO on campus.
	• It is recommended that the determination of the number of SROs needed for each school be based on but not limited to:
	  ○ School enrollment
	  ○ Discipline history
	  ○ Number of campus buildings
	  ○ Campus acreage
	  ○ Calls for service
	  ○ Location in the community
	  ○ Number of non-sworn safety personnel in the building
		(R)

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02.01.04	**School Climate**
	• Several factors pertaining to school climate should be considered when considering the best SRO fit:
	  ○ Student enrollment
	  ○ School discipline history
	  ○ Cultural and minority representation
	  ○ Special Education programs
	  ○ English as a Second Language programs
		(R)

02.01.05	**Willingness in Developing Youth** • Effective SROs have a willingness to engage with youth. • This can be demonstrated in the candidate's previous participation in youth or community policing programs.	(M)
02.01.06	**Communication Skills** • Must have excellent verbal and written communication skills.	(M)
02.01.07	**Probationary Period** • The selected SRO should have a probationary period agreed upon by the operating law enforcement agency and the school district to allow all parties to best determine if the selected officer is a proper fit for the school community.	(R)

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SECTION THREE | TRAINING

03.01.00	Training Standards	Compliance

03.01.01	**Importance**
	• The SRO must be specially trained in school-based policing, as the duties and responsibilities of an SRO are inherently different than that of other law enforcement specialties.
	• At a minimum, the SRO should attend annual training related to school safety topics. These topics may include, but are not limited to:
	  o Crisis Planning
	  o Active Threat Response
	  o Adolescent Mental Health
	• Such trainings enhance and maintain the relevancy of the SRO's skill set.
	• It is recommended that a school administrator also attend with his or her SRO to support ongoing collaboration.
	• Some opportunities for these training programs include SRO conferences such those offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers and its affiliated state associations.
		(M)

03.02.00	The Basic SRO Training Course	Compliance
03.02.01	**Basic SRO Course** • The SRO should complete a foundational school-based policing course, such as the NASRO Basic SRO Course, prior to being assigned. • If it is not practical for the new SRO to complete a foundational school-based policing course prior to the assignment, the new SRO shall complete a foundational school-based policing course within one (1) year of beginning the assignment.	(M)

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03.02.02	**The TRIAD Approach** • SROs must be trained to utilize a TRIAD approach to school-based policing. • This concept includes understanding and applying the principles of each TRIAD component: Law Enforcement (LEO), Teacher (Guest Speaker) and Informal Counselor (Mentor). • The specifics of each component include but are not limited to: ○ To be an effective law enforcement officer (LEO) in a school environment, the SRO should have a working knowledge of: ▪ Constitutional and state law ▪ Armed response ▪ Crime prevention and mitigation ▪ Interview and interrogation ▪ Investigations ▪ Crime Prevention Through Environmental School Design ▪ Patrol operations (high visibility) ▪ Advocacy within the juvenile justice system ▪ Mandatory reporting ○ To be an effective teacher/guest speaker, the SRO should be capable of delivering law-related education lessons on topics such as: ▪ Crime prevention ▪ Social media ▪ School safety ▪ Victimization ▪ Laws pertaining to students ▪ Safe traffic stops ▪ Driver safety ▪ Decision making ▪ Other topics requested by staff/parents ○ To be an effective informal counselor/mentor, the SRO should be properly trained in: ▪ Mentoring ▪ Crime prevention ▪ Empowering youth ▪ Resiliency and overall wellness ▪ Adolescent brain development ▪ Social and emotional development ▪ Recognizing and supporting diversity ▪ Improving youth decision-making skills ▪ Trauma-informed practices	**(M)**

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03.02.03	**School Administration Policies & Procedures**
	• Additional school-related training topics in support of an effective SRO program should be ongoing.
	• Examples of these include but are not limited to:
	  ○ Structure of the school's discipline policy.
	  ○ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other school-related law issues.
	  ○ Working with special needs students and the special education department within the school.
	  ○ A school-utilized behavioral intervention program.
		(R)

03.03.00	**The Advanced SRO Training Course**	Compliance
03.03.01	**Advanced SRO Course** • It is recommended that the SRO successfully complete an advanced level school-based policing course approximately one (1) year after successful completion of the basic foundational course. • This course will build on and further expand the SRO's foundational knowledge and skills.	(R)

03.04.00	**Single Officer Rapid Deployment Training**	Compliance
03.04.01	**Single Officer Rapid Deployment Training** • The SRO should successfully complete bi-annual training for single officer rapid deployment. • This training should provide appropriate methods for the SRO to be able to respond to active assailants or threats in the school.	(R)

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SECTION FOUR | COLLABORATION

04.01.00	Collaboration Between Law Enforcement and the School Community	Compliance
04.01.01	**Definition** • A successful SRO program must have a strong collaboration between the law enforcement agency and the school community. • Although various elements of the job are defined by each party, it is important that these elements are clearly defined and communicated.	(M)

04.01.02	**Defining Roles of the School Administrator and the SRO**
	• It is recommended that each party establish the role of the school administrator and the SRO in this partnership to ensure that all district policies, department policies, local laws, state laws, and federal laws are followed.
	• It is recommended that a school administrator who will be partnering with the SRO also complete Basic and other school-based policing courses with the SRO.
	  ○ This strengthens the collaboration and the understanding of this partnership in support of an effective SRO program.
	• Effective partnerships can be supported through but are not limited to the following methods:
	  ○ The MOU and its annual review for program improvements and updates.
	  ○ Shared trainings to best understand school and law practices, policies and programs.
	  ○ Regular meetings to review existing and potential school-related issues.
	  ○ Teachers correctly following the school's chain of command and the SRO correctly following agency's chain of command.
	  ○ Established sharing of information on policies and procedures.
	  ○ Regular review of CPTED at the school.
	  ○ Crisis management planning and practice.
	  ○ Community education in school-related law concerns of parents.
		(R)

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04.01.03	**The Administration's Role in SRO Selection** • The selection process of the SRO must include both the law enforcement agency and the school administration. • Factors of selection should include, but are not limited to: o School enrollment o Discipline history o Number of campus buildings o Campus acreage o Calls for service o Location in the community o Number of non-sworn safety personnel in the building	
04.01.04	**The Administration's Role in SRO Evaluation** • The effectiveness of the individual SRO must be based on the established performance goals agreed upon by the law enforcement agency and the school district. • An evaluation tool specific to the position of the SRO must be developed and utilized. o This will include evaluating the relationship between the SRO and the school administration and the effectiveness of the SRO related to the training and expectations. o This tool should include language specific to the law enforcement agency's expectations as well as the school district's expectations.	(M)
04.01.05	**The Administration's Role During the SRO Probationary Period** • The school administration shall participate in the probationary review of the selected SRO as agreed upon by the agency and the school district to allow all parties to best determine if the selected officer is a proper fit for the school community.	(M)

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LETTER FROM SANDY HOOK PROMISE

September 26, 2019.

The Honorable DONALD PAYNE JR.,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery, 103 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC, 20515.

The Honorable PETER KING.
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery, 302 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC, 20515.

DEAR CHAINMAN PAYNE AND RANKING MEMBER KING: At Sandy Hook Promise, we believe that school violence is preventable when you know the signs. We are pleased that the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery is examining this critical issue during today's hearing on "Engaging the Community: Perspectives on School Security." As you take on this work, we encourage you to

prioritize prevention and hold up proven evidence-based programs that can help stop tragedies before they happen.

We are among the family members whose loved ones were killed in the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School that took the lives of 20 precious first-graders and 6 of their dedicated educators on December 14, 2012. Together, we formed Sandy Hook Promise, a national nonprofit committed to preventing gun violence before it happens by delivering no-cost, evidence-based prevention programs to our schools that train students and adults to know the signs of gun violence and intervene to stop a potential tragedy. We have trained over 7.5 million youth and adults and averted multiple school shooting, suicide, and other violent threats across all 50 States.

While threats to our schools can come from the outside, the committee should consider that most school violence occurs between students. The Rural School and Community Trust reviewed nearly forty years of data and found that 90 percent of school-based mass violence events occurred in middle and high schools, and in these events, 65 percent of violent attacks were committed by students. Through our Know the Signs programs, students and school personnel are taught to recognize the signs of potential interpersonal violence and self-harm and take action to get help and stop a tragedy. Empowering and training our students is especially important because we know that they are often the first to see warning signs of violence and self-harm in their peers, particularly through social media.

Research shows that our students are already helping to avert tragedies. A recent report on averted school shootings showed that when school shootings have been averted, it was largely due to students speaking up about a potential threat before harm could occur. The Police Foundation's Averted School Violence Project, developed with the support of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office, tracked and evaluated 51 instances of school violence over 2 years that were averted, avoided, or somehow stopped. They found that 68 percent of all averted violent threats were stopped because a student saw something and spoke up, leading the Police Foundation to name prevention programming as their top recommendation for preventing school shootings. The Department of Homeland Security echoed this recommendation in their 2018 report on K–12 school security, stating that "the importance of detecting and addressing concerning behavior, thoughts, or statements cannot be overstated. In fact, preventing violence by detecting and addressing these red flags is more effective than any physical security measure."

At Sandy Hook Promise, we have worked diligently to create opportunities for prevention programs to grow and reach more students across the country, eliminating financial and geographic barriers for schools. In March 2018, we worked with bipartisan champions in Congress to pass the STOP School Violence Act which makes much-needed grants to States, localities, school districts, and Tribal communities to bring evidence-based violence prevention programs to their students. These grants have already helped to train millions more students in suicide and violence prevention. STOP funds are also being used to provide school personnel with threat assessment training that can help them better triage threats early and adopt a flexible, problem-solving approach to disciplinary matters that encourages a more positive school climate in which students feel treated with fairness and respect.

Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for middle and high school age youth, and that is why it is critical that suicide prevention be part of a holistic approach to protecting the health and safety of our students. Much like other forms of violence in schools and among young people, the most effective approach to preventing these costly suicides is detecting warning signs early and acting on them before a tragedy can occur. We know that 70 percent of individuals who go on to complete suicide told someone about their plans or gave some other noticeable warning sign.

We are proud to have worked with House champions to recently introduce H.R. 2599, the Suicide and Threat Assessment National Dedicated to Universal Prevention (STANDUP) Act in response to the nation's growing youth suicide crisis. The STANDUP Act would encourage more States and tribes to implement student suicide awareness and threat assessment training by conditioning the receipt of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) mental health program grants—Project AWARE grants—on the adoption of these Statewide policies. This is the first of many steps we can take to ensure that all our students have access to proven, life-saving programs, and we urge members of this Committee to support this legislation.

We thank you for holding today's hearing on school safety. There is no single solution to stopping this epidemic of school shootings and tragedies. The challenge must be met with urgency and the resources that our students and schools deserve. We

stand ready to work with every member of this Committee to protect our children from violence.

Sincerely,

MARK BARDEN,
(Daniel's father).

NICOLE HOCKLEY,
(Dylan's mom).

Mr. PAYNE. I want to thank the witnesses for their valuable testimony today and the Members for their questions.

The Members of the subcommittee may have additional questions for the witnesses and we ask that you respond expeditiously in writing to those questions.

Pursuant to the committee rule VII(D), the hearing record will be open for 10 days without objection.

Hearing no further business, the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:52 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN DONALD M. PAYNE, JR. FOR KATHY MARTINEZ-PRATHER

Question 1. Texas recently passed HB 4342, which requires an architect to serve on the Texas School Safety Center board. What is the importance of having an architect involved in school safety?

Answer. Protecting the health, safety, and welfare of building occupants is fundamental to what architects do. Design is particularly fundamental to the phases of prevention and mitigation in overall hazard planning. Architects have always been integral for safety features, such as ingress and egress and severe weather safety. Over the course of the last 2 decades, architects have worked with school communities across the country to design and create safer schools in response to repeated acts of deadly violence targeting students and educators. An architect can ensure that all stakeholder perspectives and ideas are incorporated into a new or redesign of a school—from first responders and mental health advocates to engineers as well as parents and students. They have the training to ensure a holistic approach is taken to design a school—one that will ensure it remains a welcoming learning environment, while addressing safety. That's why it is important for school officials to work with architects early in the process of their addressing the physical security of their building stock. Architects can and will be at the forefront of finding and developing new building standards and codes that can make schools safer at the critical design stage. This is one of the reasons that Texas Governor Abbott appointed an architect to his school safety task force that he established within the first 48 hours after the shooting at Santa Fe High School.

Question 2. Are schools in Texas adequately planning for how they might respond to a possible chemical or biological event, whether that's an attack or an industrial accident or some other incident, to protect students? Is this something the Federal Government needs to be more active in promoting? If so, how?

Answer. Texas schools have been involved in multi-hazard emergency operation planning for several years now. There is certainly more work to be done and new and unforeseen threats to be considered all the time. The Texas School Safety Center is rolling out new training related to emergency operation planning and identifying threats and hazards. Chemical and biological events are particularly difficult to identify and plan for. In many instances a district may not even be aware of the threat a particular industrial site may pose. It is our goal to continue working with schools to better identify and define threats and prepare for possible incidents.

One significant role the Federal Government could play is providing funding for outlets for information and training for these types of incidents. We are also in the process of establishing protocols for reviewing emergency operation plans and one area that is lacking is readily-available information for entities, such as ours, to identify and establish the types of threats at school locations. We are in the conceptual stages of how to gather information from multiple databases to be able to identify hazards by school locations. For example, while reviewing emergency operation plans we need the ability to be able to look up a school address and see that the school is within so many feet of a railroad track, is within or adjacent to the blast zone of a pipeline, is within a defined distance of a chemical or industrial plant. The ability to have that type of readily-available information could greatly assist with helping schools know what to plan for and how to train.

Question 3. The Texas School Safety Center has run a school safety clearinghouse for several years. Can you provide any lessons learned that might be useful to DHS as they establish a Federal clearinghouse?

Answer. Provide as much free on-line training as possible. There is a great deal of commercial training and information on the market and some of it is very good but it can be expensive. Providing information and especially training is a valuable commodity that many districts cannot afford. There are also many different methods and ideologies around school safety and security and it is important to not let best

practices become vendor-driven. As a clearinghouse you will find that there are many solutions floating around and often they are seeking a problem to land on and proliferate. In many instances they have been developed from one perspective, based on one incident, or sized to one need. It is vitally important to look at things from a holistic view and understand them from the perspective of the people utilizing the information and putting into practice, from the students, to the teacher, district employees, and first responders.

Question 4. Have you seen the U.S. Department of Homeland Security actively engage with schools in Texas to improve preparedness? Where do you think they can be the most effective in helping to improve school safety?

Answer. Assisting State entities in identify emerging threats or trends and best practices for prevention, mitigation, and response is critical for planning purposes.