

PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE TESTIMONY

HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SCHOOL SAFETY

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PRESENTED BY

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DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE

Good morning, Chairmen Hickernell and Roebuck and members of the House Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this very important discussion about keeping students and staff members safe in our schools. My name is Major Douglas Burig and I'm the Director of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation for the Pennsylvania State Police. The Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) is committed to protecting all Pennsylvanians and has been actively engaged in a variety of programs intended to counter the threat posed by active shooters and improve response to critical incidents in our educational facilities.

The training of law enforcement officers to rapidly and effectively respond to an active shooter event to end the threat is critically important and can have a substantial impact on the ultimate outcome of the event. PSP members initially received training for these types of incidents in the early 2000s after the Columbine High School shootings and it continued thereafter. Over a two-year period between 2012 and 2014, all PSP first responders received updated Active Shooter Response training which included realistic scenarios and role players. Additionally, all PSP cadets receive this training in prior to their graduation from the Academy. The PSP

Bureau of Emergency and Special Operations members have also provided the training to municipal officers across the commonwealth.

One of the department's priorities is to provide training to school district administrators and staff regarding the active shooter threat. In 2017, Community Services Officers and other PSP members conducted 364 presentations for thousands of attendees on this topic. The presentations included recognition of warning signs that might be indicative of someone progressing toward violence and guidance about what actions to take if an active shooter enters their facility. Most of these presentations were given specifically to educators and school district administrators.

Another service PSP provides to schools and school districts is the Risk Vulnerability Assessment Team or RVAT. The RVAT team consists of Troopers who are specially trained and certified to provide on-site security assessments. RVAT members conduct an in-depth review of the entire facility, including access controls, camera coverage, and communication protocols, and provide a detailed report to school administrators containing recommendations to enhance security measures. These recommendations

are based on their training, established industry standards and include best practices utilized by other schools. Since January 2016, PSP has completed 147 RVAT assessments; the vast majority of those facilities were schools.

Regular interaction and sharing of information between law enforcement and school district administrators is essential to protect our schools. In the field, PSP stations conduct annual response drills and tabletop exercises with schools in within their respective coverage areas to prepare for critical incidents. The commonwealth's primary designated intelligence fusion center, the Pennsylvania Criminal Intelligence Center or PaCIC, maintains a full-time Critical Infrastructure & Key Resources (CIKR) protection unit to share threat and crime information with private and public-sector entities, including schools. Through this collaboration, PaCIC regularly sends written briefs and alerts to partners in hundreds of schools across the commonwealth, answers requests for information from school administrators and assists law enforcement with their investigations in those facilities.

The PSP will continue to work with school officials and partners across all disciplines to ensure that children and staff members will be safe in our schools. I look forward to answering any questions the committee might have for me.