Testimony of Brian Corbino in opposition to Senate Bill 1108 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE ZERO-TOLERANCE SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT ACT.

Honorable Representatives and Senators of the Judiciary Committee:

As I sat before this committee hearing the testimony of the Reidy family, I was alarmed at the thought process that seemed to underlie their support and the commentary from members of the committee.

Specifically, the idea that somehow increasing the penalty for threatening to commit atrocities against schools will reduce such threats. I remember the day that a lunatic invaded the Sandy Hook Elementary School. And all I felt was stunned anger. Appalled that the adults to whom the children's lives had been entrusted were left defenseless by statute. And because of this, twenty-six people died.

With all due respect, Senator Boucher, you are hoping to deter a lunatic with a penalty? If I heard the Reidy's testimony correctly, this caller said he was going to "… shoot his way into the building, kill everyone in the school, and then kill himself." What kind of deterrent do you think prison represents to a man who intends to kill himself?

As much as it pains civilized people to contemplate it, ours is a world governed by the aggressive use of violent force. Criminals have long admitted that they will avoid attacking people that are armed. We should take advantage of this fact, and allow our teachers and school administrators to exercise their natural, civil, and Constitutionally-protected right to arm themselves however they see fit so that they may effectively defend themselves and their young charges. Once it is public knowledge that schools are no longer soft targets, criminals will stop attacking them. Even a lunatic knows when he's not going to get his infamy.

I hear about lockdowns on a regular basis, and they never seem to find a threat. There were bomb threats against schools when I was young, but we never locked a school down. You can, and probably will, argue that we didn't face the threats then that we do now. And that's as may be. But laws are never a deterrent to a committed criminal. If someone is strongly inclined to commit an atrocity, the only thing that will stop them is the credible threat of violent force. Again, you may want to think that we're somehow above that, but you would be mistaken. The existence of people who would call a school and threaten to slaughter children wholesale should disabuse you of that notion.

These stories of helpless people cowering in closets infuriate me. Those people are helpless **because of you**. You passed a law that forced them to be helpless because of the mistaken belief that a person with murder on their mind would somehow conclude "well, I was good with murder and mayhem, but violating a gun-free-zone is one law too many to break." Please. There's talk of the sadism of the lunatic that makes these calls. But I posit that the *real* sadists are those that demand we subject children to repeated trauma by denying real protection to adults.

I feel for the parents. Their children are re-victimized over and over again by a system that is utterly unfit for the threat it faces. The worry is that the children will not heal – of course they won't; everyone around them keeps reminding them just how defenseless and at risk they are. You cannot repeatedly tear a scab from a wound and expect healing.

I oppose this bill not because of any particular threat to the rights of the people, but because it is utterly pointless. It is already unlawful to threaten a violent act, it is already illegal to threaten acts of terrorism, and yet the threats continue. The proposed bill is akin to banging one's head against the wall, with fewer opportunities for a positive outcome.

So we need to try something different. We have several excellent facilities in this very state that offer self-defense training. If that is people's concern with allowing permit-holding teachers and administrators to carry their sidearm, we have the ability to get them the appropriate training for whatever situation they are likely to encounter. And concerns that the teachers will be disarmed by their students are overblown. Proper equipment and training will certainly minimize that threat. And if you're concerned that a teacher may take leave of their senses and start shooting, I'd suggest that said teacher would probably have already done so.

In closing, we've been there. We've done that. It's failed. It's time to try something new. Make schools safe by allowing the adults to whom we already entrust our children's education to carry with them the most effective means of self-defense ever devised.

Kind Regards,

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