

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Public Hearing on Senate Bill No. 25, An Act Concerning Special Police Forces
on College Campuses

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Submitted by:

Joseph Mazzarella, S.V.P., Mutualink, Inc.

Submitted to:

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee,
Connecticut General Assembly

Dear Co-Chair Sen. Bartolomeo, Co-Chair Rep. Willis and Legislative Committee Members,

Thank you for an opportunity to submit testimony in regards to Senate Bill No. 25 regarding police on college campuses. As a general matter, we would SUPPORT the bill as proposed.

I am the Senior Vice President and General Counsel of Mutualink, Inc., a Connecticut based company that provides state of the art, real time multimedia interoperable communications solutions linking first responder agencies and critical infrastructure entities, such as schools and colleges, in times of emergency. Having worked with and installed our solution with over a thousand state and local agencies across the nation, including state and local police, fire, offices of emergency management, hospitals and schools, we have acquired significant insights into the particular challenges associated with campus safety. This includes having worked with state and local SWAT teams in active shooter, terror and natural disaster based exercises.

All Hazards. While campus safety naturally raises concerns about active shooters, given that alarming up-trend in school shootings, they are also vulnerable to other types of emergencies ranging from manmade to natural disasters. The reality is colleges must be prepared, ready and capable of responding to all hazards. In this regard, the presence of trained public safety officers on or in the immediate vicinity of a campus will aid in a quicker response to an emergency.

Scalable Multi-agency Response. However, whether or not a campus police force is present, any significant emergency on campus will trigger a multi-agency response extending beyond campus police. First responders from the college's host community as well as from nearby communities and the state agencies will be involved. Beyond the law enforcement response, other emergency response and support entities will also be involved. These include fire and EMS, area hospitals, and potentially offices of emergency management, health agencies and even NGOs in immediate post-incident recovery. The need to quickly assess, share and coordinate information and communications during a dynamic, unfolding situation is essential for an effective response and resolution.

It's About Time. Beyond anything else, time matters most. Time to threat resolution (TTR) is the single most critical factor in saving lives. TTR goes beyond conventional emergency response

metric based on average time of arrival from initial 9-1-1 call. This is especially true in the case of active shooter emergencies. As the Columbine High School Massacre demonstrated, quickly arriving, assessing and awaiting back-up is no longer sufficient, and law enforcement agencies have changed their protocols. Now, the first to arrive is the first to enter. The objective is singularly focused on identifying hostile actors, denying them freedom movement and neutralizing them as quickly as possible.

Immediate Engagement. The protocol is highly complex and fraught with risk from many perspectives. When arriving, information is scant. Communications from callers are arriving at emergency dispatch, and dispatchers are relaying information to responders. Information is often contradictory, incomplete, summarized, dropped or not timely delivered. Communications occur over radio agency radios. Other arriving agencies may have incompatible radio communications thwarting coordination with others on scene. Meanwhile, the first responder is entering an area with limited information about where and how many suspects there are, what they look like, and what weapons they have. They also often lack intimate knowledge of building and campus layouts, and recall can be impaired under high stress circumstances. This leaves first responders open to ambush, unable to quickly and efficiently navigate, and renders bystanders subject to misidentification as potential threats.

Upon entry if any students or faculty are injured, first responders are instructed to move past the wounded in search of the suspects. The injured must wait. Emergency medical personnel cannot attend to victims until the threat area is secured. Those injured continue to bleed as time passes and risk of death increases. So, time matters not only for stopping assailants but also for reaching and treating wounded victims.

50% Reduction in Time to Resolution. In active shooter exercises conducted with county SWAT teams in New York State and also with the Hartford Police Department, ***Time to Resolution (TTR) is reduced by 40-50%*** with real time multimedia interoperability between schools and first responder agencies. This translates from anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes in time savings during a single shooter active threat. Being able to bridge communications between colleges and first responders, including radios, immediately upon an emergency and sharing real time video from campus and building surveillance cameras with first responders provides critical, life-saving advantages. With access to surveillance cameras, responders can see what is happening, identify suspects and also track location of suspects, providing immediate advantages on entry. Additionally, by linking college security radios with responders as well as bridging in other communications devices such as telephones and mobile phones, additional critical information can be shared directly with responders as needed. By further linking fixed and mobile phone emergency panic buttons, BlueLight stations, mass notification and alarm systems, automatic emergency communications and video linkage can occur providing immediate situational awareness information while responding.

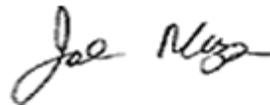
Whether or not on campus police agencies are authorized, the fundamental challenge of reducing TTR remains and colleges must be equipped with the proper technology to enable a coordinated first responder response with vicinity partners and enhanced awareness as to what, where, when and who. While properly trained law enforcement personnel are a necessity in being able to thwart

or neutralize grave threats, this capability is only as effective as the information these officers have to act upon. Situational awareness brought about by seamless communications, media and information sharing and collaboration are vital to hastening resolution under fluid and chaotic circumstances. Few community college police units will have the personnel, specialized tactical training and equipment to contend with a large scale attack. They will, at best, slow well-armed and motivated attackers committed to inflicting maximum fatalities. Further, as the Paris and San Bernardino attacks indicate, attackers are diverging from the prior patterns of attack followed by suicide once police respond. Instead, attackers are choosing to flee and target secondary sites of opportunity to maximize mayhem. Thus, it is critical to recognize that any effective safety and security posture requires the proper tools of communication and collaboration to enable a scalable coordinated response among partner agencies.

Accordingly, while we support the proposed bill, we respectfully caution that authorization of on-campus police is one potential piece of an overall enhanced safety and security solution. There are compelling arguments for authorization, especially in regards to situating trained personnel in close proximity to a potential emergency. This can prove to be a critical time savings. This is counterbalanced by other factors such as the need for continual training and adequately equipping campus police personnel and the equally important need for enhanced security systems and capabilities. We applaud the Committee for addressing these difficult issues and seeking ways to improve campus security. There is little doubt, based on national trends and other external threats, that heightening campus security is an important priority. We stand ready and willing to assist the Committee in its deliberations on this critical issue.

In closing, it is requested that this testimony be entered into the record of the Committee's proceedings and duly considered.

Submitted as of the date first above written,



Joe Mazarella

Senior Vice President,
Mutualink, Inc.
1269 South Broad Street
Wallingford, Connecticut 06492